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A HOUSE DIVIDED

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"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all thy Piety and Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYÂM.

I.

THE map of what our geography calls the Middle Atlantic States is surely not properly divided. New York, Pennsylvania, and the Virginias spread their ample proportions over almost its entire surface, while New Jersey and Maryland present but limited areas in comparison. There is also a very small peninsula called Delaware. New Castle County, with its rich pastures, prosperous farms, and miles of well-trimmed hedges, is a picture in itself. Then too there is the river;—sometimes intensely blue and rippling with turbulent, white-crested waves, at others colorless and smooth as a mirror; treacherous too, and capable of beating down its banks and inundating the surrounding country, should it desire to do so. And along the river are the marshes—salt marshes, you would be told, and therefore not unhealthy.

Not far inland is the Bear Station. I believe it is now a flourishing settlement, with houses, shops, a telegraph office, etc., but not so very long ago it was simply an old freight car, where hapless passengers waited until the uncertain accommodation trains thought fit to arrive.

One stormy September evening Mr. Barnett, the station master, sat in the freight car and waited impatiently for the evening train from Philadelphia, already much overdue. He occupied one of the

two wooden armchairs the place contained and remarked that he wished he had started a fire, just to make things seem more cheerful. His companion tilted the other chair as far back as possible against the dingy wall and replied that for his part he considered it extravagant to waste fuel by starting fires too soon. Silence ensued for a few minutes, while Mr. Barnett gently stroked his beard.

"Any of your folks been to town?" he ventured presently.

"No," was the laconic response.

"Expectin' company maybe?"

"Can't say that I am."

Clearly there was not much information to be extracted from that source, and conversation languished for a time.

"There she comes," said Mr. Barnett with evident relief, as he took his red lantern and hurried out to the platform.

The Bear Station was not popular, it seemed, for but one passenger alighted, looking disgustedly at the wet boards and turning up his coat collar as a slight protection against the driving rain.

"Was you expectin' to be met?" inquired Mr. Barnett, approaching from the rear.

"Yes," said the stranger, clutching wildly at his hat, with which the wind seemed inclined to take liberties; "that is, I—I hoped some one would be here. I scarcely know how to find my way, but perhaps you can direct me. My name is Bradley; I have come to teach the school at Red Lion for a time."

"Then," said Mr. Barnett fervently, "the Lord help you; you'll need help sure."

"I have the name of the place at which I am to board in my pocket," continued the young man, "if I could let go my hat long enough to get it."

"You might come inside," suggested Mr. Barnett doubtfully, adding as they entered, "the school-teacher most generally boards around among the folks, a while with each family; some of 'em likes 'it and some don't."

"This is the name," exclaimed the discouraged teacher, after looking through several letters, "Farnaby—Joseph Farnaby. I wonder where I can find him?"

"Reckon you won't have very fur to look," said Mr. Barnett after a moment's astonished silence, indicating with a wave of the lantern his companion of the early evening, who remained comfortably tilted back in his chair.

"Yes, that's me," he announced, rising and moving slowly towards the door. "Got a trunk?"

The stranger acknowledged that he had, and, having complied with a request to bear a hand in carrying it to the wagon, climbed into the

vehicle himself, and they drove off. Meanwhile Mr. Barnett stood open-mouthed in the door and watched them.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he ejaculated as he began to close up for the night. "Whatever's got into Joe Farnaby to make him board the teacher?"

"I wonder," he added, with a chuckle, as he started on his homeward walk,—*"I do wonder how the teacher's goin' to like stayin' in the Farnabys' house?"*

Mr. Farnaby and his guest drove on in silence. After plunging through the mud and rain for what seemed to the young man an interminable distance, they turned into a lane which appeared to lead nowhere in particular, but eventually brought them to a small house from the windows of which shone a faint gleam of light. Disregarding the house entirely, Mr. Farnaby drove directly into a barn, whose doors had evidently stood open for many months and were now entirely without hinges.

"When I put the horse away," said Mr. Farnaby, "we'll go into the house."

Richard Bradley waited in silence until the horse was fed and stabled for the night, then followed his guide from the disorderly barn across a still more untidy back yard towards what was evidently the kitchen.

"Come in," said Mr. Farnaby, opening the door and preceding his guest.

Somewhat blinded by the sudden flood of light, Richard stepped inside and closed the door. The room seemed full of people, and he waited a moment before advancing, hoping for an introduction.

"Josie," said his host, addressing a pretty, vivacious-looking girl who had risen at their entrance, "tell your mother I've brought the new teacher home."

"Mother," said Josie, turning to a little woman who had continued cooking something over the stove without in any way noticing their entrance, "father says he's brought home the new teacher."

"Tell your father," replied the small figure, "that it was just like him to do it and never say a word about it."

Pretty Josie shrugged her shoulders and exchanged a meaning glance with a clumsy boy of about sixteen. Then she turned to the stranger, who still stood uncomfortably by the door.

"Won't you come nearer the fire?" she said politely; "you must be cold and wet."

As escape from this eccentric household seemed impossible for the present, the unwelcome guest accepted her invitation.

"It's a queer thing," here ejaculated Farnaby, who had been look-

ing for something on the shelf,—“a *mighty* queer thing I never find my pipe where I left it.”

He went into the adjoining room as he spoke, slamming the door after him.

“When he comes back,” remarked Mrs. Farnaby to her daughter, “you can tell him his pipe’s on the table, where he left it this morning.”

“I trust, Mrs. Farnaby,” ventured Richard at this point,—“I trust my presence does not seriously inconvenience you. I will go away to-morrow, but for to-night——”

“Oh,” said Mrs. Farnaby ungraciously, “it’s not your presence,—that don’t matter one way or the other; you’re welcome to stay forever for all I care,—it’s *his* meanness in never saying a word. That’s what I can’t stand.”

Not feeling sure what reply would be appropriate, Richard took refuge in silence, while Mrs. Farnaby removed the ham she was frying and announced that supper was ready.

“Call your father, Anna,” she said as she listlessly seated herself, while Josie placed a chair for their guest.

Out of the shadow of a remote corner a girl advanced. With uncertain step she approached the centre of the room and paused a moment in the full glow of the lamplight. Her great, dark eyes looked directly at Richard with the pathetic blankness of the blind, while softly curling tendrils of hair seemed to form a halo around her face. Dexterously avoiding the hot stove, she passed through the door, closing it after her.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Farnaby as the girl disappeared, “she’s blind. Seems like a pity, don’t it, at her age?”

“It does indeed,” replied Richard gently. “Was she born so?”

“No,” said Mrs. Farnaby, “it’s his fault,” motioning towards her husband’s vacant place.

“Mother,” cried Josie indignantly, “how can you? Father gave Anna his gun to hold when she was a child,” she explained, turning to Richard, “and it exploded. She has been blind ever since, but it wasn’t his fault. I’m sure he cares more for her than——”

She checked herself abruptly.

“Well,” said her mother, “I don’t know what you call it. If he hadn’t forced her to hold the gun she’d never have been blind. He *made* her carry it because she was afraid. That’s Joe Farnaby all over. The child was afraid of a gun, so every time he used it she had to put it away; he made her do it once too often, though. Much good it does her now for him to be sorry; not that he says he’s sorry,—it’s not his way,—but he is just the same. And never a meal will he eat if Anna don’t tell him it’s ready.”

The return of Mr. Farnaby and his blind daughter checked any further revelations, and supper was eaten in silence. When the meal was finished Richard asked to be allowed to retire, pleading fatigue as an excuse for his early withdrawal from the family circle, none of whom, indeed, seemed to regret his departure.

As the only comfortable thing his room appeared to contain was a huge feather bed, he lost no time in depositing himself in its midst, where he busied himself with conjectures about the Farnaby household until he fell asleep, firmly resolving, however, to leave the place in the morning.

Down in the kitchen silence ensued for some minutes after Richard's departure. Mr. Farnaby smoked his pipe with apparent appreciation of its flavor, while his wife sat listlessly beside the fire with folded hands.

"Tell your mother," he said at last, addressing Josie, "that the teacher is going to board here."

Josie accordingly announced the fact to her mother, who might reasonably be supposed to have heard it for herself.

"Tell your father," she responded, "that I don't want him."

"I have brought him here, Anna," he continued, turning to his other daughter, who sat beside him, "because I need the money he will pay for his board, and I intend he shall remain. It does not matter whether he is wanted or not; he shall stay just as long as I see fit, and I wish to hear no more about it."

He rose as he spoke, and knocking the ashes out of his pipe laid it on the mantel, Mrs. Farnaby watching his every movement in a furtive manner. When he took up his hat she started involuntarily to her feet, clasping her hands nervously together. He looked steadily past her, and opening a closet door searched for something inside it.

"Josie," he remarked finally, "find my rubber coat for me."

"Anna," whispered Mrs. Farnaby as Josie disappeared into the depths of the closet, "ask him where he's going; I *must* know. I'll get the coat; I took it upstairs to mend."

She put her face close to her daughter's, clutching Anna's arm tightly.

"Ask him where he's going," she repeated, "but don't say I told you to do it or he won't answer. Pretend you want to know yourself. *Ask him!*"

"Father," said Anna, as she heard her mother leave the room, "mother has gone to get your coat. It was badly torn, you know, and she has mended it; it took her a long time, and she worked very hard over it."

He came and stood beside her, stroking her hair gently.

"It is raining," she continued, "and you must be so tired. Where

is it that you go almost every night? You never stay with me now in the evenings and talk to me as you used to do; I miss you so, father—you don't know how much. Where do you go?"

Mrs. Farnaby, returning with the coat, waited breathlessly for the reply.

"Josie," he said, "help me on with my coat."

Josie advanced obediently, but her mother motioned her aside, and, approaching her husband, held up the garment that he might easily slip his arms into the sleeves.

"Josie," he repeated, apparently unconscious of her presence, "help me on with my coat."

He buttoned it closely about him and stooped to kiss his blind child.

"Tell your mother, Anna," he remarked, "that I don't know when I will be home."

"Tell your father, Anna," said Mrs. Farnaby as she turned up the lamp, "that it don't matter to me when he comes home."

II.

THE first rays of the rising sun shone through the curtainless windows of Richard Bradley's rooms and, falling directly across his eyes, wakened that young gentleman some hours before the day usually began for him. As he lay in that hazy and contented state of mind which precedes entire consciousness he began to wonder where he was and what he was doing there. These queries finally disposed of to his satisfaction, he decided that the first thing to do was to get up and determine his future course of action after breakfast, so he proceeded to make his toilet as well as he could with the very limited appliances at his command.

"It is fortunate," he reflected, "that I have no opposite neighbors, for circumstances are against pulling down the shade or closing the shutter."

He paused a moment by the window and looked out. There were, indeed, no opposite neighbors closer than New Jersey, but instead was the broad expanse of the river glistening in the sunshine, with an occasional white sail already in sight. The house seemed almost on a level with the water, but he realized that the land sloped gently into a marsh, and a dim recollection arose within him that he had heard somewhere of the reed-bird shooting on the Delaware marshes. Surely this house was admirably situated for such purposes.

"On second thoughts," he said, "I don't think I will look for another boarding-place just yet unless I find I have to."

After breakfast he asked to be directed to the school-house, and was informed that Josie was going to take the old gray mare to be

shod in Red Lion, and as it was directly on his way he might as well go along.

Evidently the mare was in no hurry to reach her destination, and they ambled along for a time in silence.

"Mr. Bradley," said Josie suddenly, "you must think us a very strange family."

"I was sorry," he replied, after a moment, "that I should have caused Mrs. Farnaby any inconvenience."

"She didn't mean to be rude to you—poor mother," said the girl, "she has a great deal to bear. As you probably noticed, she and father don't speak to each other; they haven't spoken, even once, for sixteen years; we don't know why."

"I should think," said Richard, "that they would forget sometimes."

"Not father," she said quickly; "he never forgets. I cannot understand it at all. Look at our house, it is almost tumbling down, and the barn even has to be propped up in places. The corn in that field is cut and shocked, but it will stand out there all winter. And we don't any of us dare to ask him why it is. When I can first remember there was not a better kept place in New Castle County than ours, and now look at it."

Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, and she jerked the reins impatiently.

"It must be very hard for you," said Richard, somewhat embarrassed for an appropriate reply.

"It is," she returned. "Joe, my older brother, couldn't stand it and left home when he was twenty-one. He wanted mother to go with him, but she wouldn't."

"I suppose," said Richard, "she did not like to leave her children."

"No, it wasn't that—at least, I mean, not entirely. She would not leave father. Why, Mr. Bradley, she loves him after all; she watches for him when he is out, and never goes to sleep until he comes home, no matter how late it is. He goes somewhere nearly every night, but never tells her where he has been.

"This miserable life is killing her," continued Josie with a little quiver in her voice, "and there is nothing we can do—nothing at all."

"It is very sad, of course, but after a while things may come out all right," said Richard, uncomfortably conscious that he was indulging in a very commonplace attempt at consolation.

"Oh, no, they won't," she returned. "Anna once ventured to talk to father about it and beg him to forgive and forget whatever happened so long ago, but he said they had sworn never to speak to

each other again, and that an oath was an oath and should never be broken. It never will be, I am sure."

"You are named for your father, are you not?" inquired Richard.

Josie laughed impatiently.

"Oh, yes," she said, "we're *all* named for him! First Joe; then I came, and they called me Josephine; then Anna—her name is Joanna, you know; then Josephus, the boy you saw last night. All named for him, and he don't care for any of us, except Anna."

"Could you tell me," said Richard, "where to look for a place to live? Of course, I cannot stay with you if your mother is unwilling to have me."

"I hope you won't go," said Josie earnestly, "it would make father so angry, as he brought you home. Of course, we are not very pleasant to live with,—I can understand that,—but we will try not to intrude our family troubles upon you. Indeed, it is a pleasure to see a strange face; we never go anywhere and we have no visitors, except one, perhaps."

Her face clouded as though from an unpleasant memory.

"I do not want to go, I assure you," he said courteously.

Josie's face was tinted like an apple-blossom, and her large blue eyes were shaded by long black lashes; she looked directly at her companion.

"Don't go," she said softly, "I—I wish you wouldn't."

Several days later Richard Bradley wrote the following letter, which was read with much interest by several of the gilded youth of New York:

"MY DEAR ORMSBY: I have not fallen by the wayside, neither have I tumbled off the earth together with the pins and dead donkeys, as you doubtless suppose; I am simply principal (and corps of assistants as well) of the district school at Red Lion, Delaware. Rather a lowly position for the valedictorian of his class, perhaps, but *que voulez vous?* I had to do something, and this was the only opportunity that offered, so I grasped it.

"Of course, you heard about our family row. I can imagine how its details have been gloated over by all the gossips in town. I don't regret my part in it, however, and would stand by Nell just the same if I had to do it over again; she had a perfect right to marry to please herself—which, by the way, she certainly did. It was a little hard on me, I think, to be cut off from the base of supplies so suddenly, and it's odd how many necessities there are in life, all demanding ready money; I don't think I ever quite realized it before. However, I doubt if the old man holds out longer than Christmas,—he must be very lonely without either of us,—and until then I shall get along all right.

"Red Lion consists of a church, a post-office, a blacksmith

shop, and two or three houses. You couldn't imagine anything more primitive if you tried. I have an idea that I shall be a howling success in teaching the young idea how to shoot just as soon as I get my cubs licked into shape (literally) a little more. I certainly shouldn't like a lifetime of it, but a few months is rather interesting.

"I am boarding with a jovial family, where my host and hostess have not exchanged a word for sixteen years. This family all speak grammatically (which is more than I can say for most of my new friends), but so far as I can find out they have no education whatever; I must confess they puzzle me. The two daughters of the house of Farnaby are more than merely pretty, and apparently quite refined. One of them is blind, and has, without exception, the loveliest and most spirituelle face I have ever seen; the other is charming also in a different way. I should judge they were about eighteen and nineteen years of age.

"The country is picturesque, and there are some fine old places near here. I do not imagine I shall meet the owners of them, however; they don't look as though they mingled socially with the district school-teacher.

"We rise very early at my abiding-place, and retire at a corresponding hour. No one talks in the evening, no one reads, no one does anything, and yet I am not bored at all so far. I wish you could come down for a while; I want to teach you how to shoot reed-birds; I want to show you the beauties of the landscape—and I want to show you Miss Josie Farnaby. Yours ever,

"DICK.

"P. S.—I brought my dress suit; I wonder why?"

III.

MR. SMITHERS, the Red Lion postmaster, was sorting and distributing the mail. This was a work of some time, not that the contents of the leather bag were so numerous, but because he was naturally deliberate in his movements and had to carefully scrutinize each letter as he drew it forth. Five or six men sat around on any convenient bag or barrel waiting for their mail and discussing the affairs of the nation generally.

"It stands to reason," remarked one, "that the country's jest goin' to the dogs. What else can it do with such men as John Green runnin' fur Sheriff?"

"Not to mention the Levy Court," added another.

"Oh, well," said a third, who sat upon the counter swinging his legs, "don't be hard on 'em. They ain't much, I know, but the Democratic party can't do no better."

"Sho, now!" said Mr. Smithers, who had just drawn a postal-card from the bag, "Bill Morris's daughter's baby has come down with cholery *and* fantum. Ain't that too bad?"

Very general sympathy was expressed for the unfortunate occurrence.

"Here's the third letter Tom Brown's had from Wilmington this week," continued the postmaster. "I do believe he's sold that sorrel colt at last."

"Then somebody's got took in mighty bad," remarked the gentleman on the counter. "A more vicious, ill-tempered brute I never seen; spavined too."

"Tom's lucky to git rid of him at any price," said the occupant of a comfortable seat on a keg of nails.

"Here's a letter with a black border fur old Mrs. Grimes," said Mr. Smithers, "postmarked Milford too. I'm kinder feared that sister o' hern must be dead."

Two square white envelopes were next produced.

"Mr. Richard Bradley, care Joseph Farnaby, Esq.," proclaimed Mr. Smithers. "That's the new teacher, ain't it? Only jest smell the one with sealin'-wax."

The letter was passed from hand to hand and eagerly sniffed at.

"Seems to favor white-rose cologne, don't it?" said one.

"No," said another, after a prolonged examination, "it's more sickish than white rose. Kinder like them tubyroses the wimmin's so fond of puttin' around at funerals, though why corpses should be supposed to be partial to 'em I don't know."

"He's been here now over three weeks," said Mr. Smithers, "and he ain't had no mail before. Wonder how he likes his boardin'-place, anyhow?"

"Well," said the man on the counter, slowly descending to the floor, "if you've got to the bottom of the bag and there ain't no mail fur me, I'll be off."

"Hold on," said Mr. Smithers, "here's somethin' else clean down in the corner. I nearly missed it."

He produced a small box, sealed with red wax.

"Registered, as I live!" he said excitedly, "and blamed if it ain't fur old Si Poole. Now what do you think of that?"

The box was passed around as the letter had been; it was shaken and otherwise carefully examined, but its contents were a mystery to all.

"Put it back," exclaimed a man who stood by the window; "be quick! he's comin'!"

The box was hastily dropped in its proper pigeon-hole, and the postmaster began sorting newspapers with a preoccupied air.

"Anything fur you, Mr. Poole?" he said in reply to the old man's inquiry; "why, I really don't remember; I'll look and see."

As Mr. Poole signed for his registered package and turned to depart the door opened to admit Joseph Farnaby.

"Ah, Mr. Farnaby," he said, "as you're going my way, perhaps you will be so kind as to give me a lift?"

He waited while Mr. Farnaby asked for his mail, receiving the two letters for Richard Bradley and a newspaper for himself, then followed him from the post-office and climbed after him into the dilapidated buggy. The loafers inside crowded about the window and watched them drive away. Mr. Smithers produced a plug of tobacco and, having first taken a bite himself, passed it around among his friends.

"There goes a worthy couple," he remarked as the vehicle slowly disappeared.

The two men drove on for a time in silence, but as they crossed the brook and began ascending the long hill Mr. Poole took the little box from his pocket and regarded it affectionately.

"It's a little bundle," he said, "a very little bundle to cost such a lot of money. You couldn't guess, now, what's in it."

"I'm not good at guessing," said Mr. Farnaby gruffly. "What if it did cost money? You can afford to get what you like."

The old man chuckled delightedly.

"So I can, friend Farnaby, so I can," he said. "I'm a rich man, ain't I? And getting richer every day, or, I should say, every night. Whatever I want I can get—*whatever I want!* That's so, ain't it?"

"What's the use in asking questions?" said Farnaby. "You know it's so. Why do you ask me about it?"

"Just because I like to hear you say it," replied the old man. "I'll tell you what's in this box, though. It's a ring. What do you say to that?"

"Well," said Mr. Farnaby, "I don't see what you want with rings at your time of life, but, of course, you have a right to get them."

"It's not for me," said Mr. Poole—"oh, dear, no. It's for a much smaller, whiter hand than mine; such a pretty little hand it is. Why don't you have this buggy mended? It's not safe."

"I have no money, as you know."

"Too bad! too bad! And your house wants paint, your fences are tumbling down; even your barn has to be propped to keep it up. Such a pity! and the land is valuable too."

Mr. Farnaby touched up the horse somewhat smartly, but made no response.

"Why don't you ask me who the ring is for?" inquired the old man.

"Because," replied his companion, "I do not care. It is none of my business what you do with anything you buy."

"No," agreed Mr. Poole cheerfully, "that's quite true, friend

Farnaby. It's no affair of yours, of course, but I thought you might be interested because of your friendship for me, you know. However, I won't tell you about it until to-night; I suppose you'll be out, as usual?"

"Yes," said Farnaby moodily, "of course."

"We'll be alone to-night," resumed the other, "quite alone—just you and I. Such an interesting evening as we may have if things go my way, and I believe they will. I feel as though my lucky star will be in the ascendant."

"When were you anything but lucky? Sometimes I think it's true that the devil helps his own."

"Yes," said Mr. Poole, "so I believed, Joseph Farnaby, when you stole my promised wife; so I said as I watched the first years of your married life, and saw you apparently prosperous and happy."

"I thought the past was to be buried?" said Farnaby. "We have agreed to forget it if possible; at all events, not to refer to it. I am neither prosperous nor happy now; let that content you."

"Who is discontented?" demanded the old man briskly. "Not I, I assure you, and as for you—well, you made your bed yourself, you know."

"Let sleeping dogs lie still," returned the other; "what is done, is *done*! There is no altering the past."

"No," said Silas Poole slowly, "that is true. The past is irrevocable, but not therefore forgotten. I can be silent, as I have been for so many years, but my memory is good. Shall I tell you a few recollections of the past that come to me sometimes at night?"

"I do not care to hear them."

"I remember a boy growing up without home or family ties—a lonely boy, brought up by relations who did not want him. He had a sister, but he did not know her, for she also was reared by other relatives who did not want her. I remember a young fellow, eager and ambitious; working early and late, and little by little laying by the money he coveted, not for itself, but for what it rendered possible. He speculated and was fortunate, and after a long while he had enough; then he realized that his youth was about gone and he was still lonely. He wanted a home. Well, he had money now, so he bought one and sent for his sister to live with him. He wanted friends too, now that he had time to think about it, and he bought them also, although he did not realize it at the time. You were one of them. He brought you down here and gave you a start in life. Have you forgotten?"

"God knows," said Farnaby hoarsely, "I wish I had never seen you."

"I remember," continued the old man slowly, "a girl, with blue

eyes that laughed and fair hair which shone like gold in the sunshine, and how different the world seemed because she existed. For the first time in his life the man of whom we are speaking understood how it felt to be happy, for he was loved—or so he supposed. At that time he knew but little of women, so he believed in them. He felt that he was unworthy of her, that his grave middle age was unsuitable to her youth, but he meant to make her happy. I think he could have done it."

He paused for a moment and returned the salutation of a passing acquaintance.

"He brought you, Joseph Farnaby, and introduced you to this girl, because he wanted his wife and friend to know and like each other; he was glad they seemed so congenial, for your home was near theirs. He thought you would marry soon; he hoped you might fancy his sister."

The wheels of the buggy creaked dismally as they slowly toiled up the hill.

"I remember also," resumed the old man after a long pause, "the note she wrote him saying that when he received it she would be married to his friend, and begging his forgiveness for the way she had treated him. I can repeat it word for word. Shall I do so?"

His companion made a gesture of dissent, and endeavored to induce the old horse to quicken his pace.

"I have not forgotten the vow he made after he read that note," said Silas Poole; "it has been the one object of my life ever since. The tide was long in turning, Joseph Farnaby, but it's going out now for you, I think.

"While you were in your fool's paradise," he continued, dropping his metaphor suddenly, "I waited patiently, knowing the end must come some time. My sister married and went away, and afterwards, as you know, she died, so I have lived by myself all this time. For years I waited—long, lonely years, spent for the most part in companionship with my thoughts. I leave you to imagine what they were. Well, at last the day for which I watched is at hand; the end has come. You know the truth about your wife at last; how she——"

"Stop," cried Farnaby, "this shall not go on!"

"Oh, well," replied his companion, "as you please, of course. Curious thing memory is, though, isn't it? I wonder what started us to talk of old times?"

"You began it."

"So I did. However, we will change the subject now, as you don't appear to like it. Who is that crossing the field?"

"It's Josie," said Mr. Farnaby, looking in the direction indicated,—"Josie and Mr. Bradley."

"Bradley?" said the old man—"Bradley? That's the new teacher, ain't it? He's here to teach, not to stroll around the country. Why isn't he doing it?"

"Saturday," said Farnaby briefly.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" returned Mr. Poole, laying a detaining hand on the reins. "Well, you stop right here. We'll wait until they reach the road, then I'll get out and walk, and Mr. Bradley shall ride with you. It's a pity to have him get tired, and walking over fields is trying work to those who are not used to it."

Joseph Farnaby regarded his companion morosely as they waited for the unconscious pair to approach.

"What is it to you," he said finally, "whether Mr. Bradley walks or rides?"

"Nothing whatever," was the brisk reply, "except that I want to walk with Josie—pretty Josie. She's your daughter, you know, and therefore I take an interest in her."

"Mr. Bradley," said Farnaby as his daughter and her escort reached the road, "here is some mail for you, and I'll give you a ride home; Mr. Poole prefers to walk."

"But surely," said Richard, hesitating, "if anyone rides, it should be Miss Farnaby. She has had a long walk and must be tired."

"Get in," said Farnaby grimly, "Josie would rather walk. Get in."

Richard involuntarily obeyed the last command and stepped into the vehicle; as they drove off he found himself wondering why he had done so.

Left stranded in the road by this most sudden and undesired exchange of companions, Josie stood for a moment speechless, then started for home, saying as she did so:

"I should think, Mr. Poole, that at your age it would be wisest for you to ride as much as possible. You should spare yourself all you can, you know."

"Stop a minute," cried the old man, breathless with his endeavor to keep pace with her; "not so fast, my dear. I saw you coming and got out because I wanted to talk to you."

"Then," said Josie ungraciously, "you did a very silly thing, for I certainly don't want to talk to you."

"See," said he, placing a detaining hand on her shoulder,—"just see what I've got to show you."

He drew the small box from his pocket as he spoke and began unwrapping it. Josie was a true daughter of Eve, and therefore curious. She leaned carelessly against the fence, watching the box emerge from its brown paper cover with interest.

"There," said he triumphantly, as a small morocco case appeared, "now open it."

She did so, disclosing a hoop of diamonds on a bed of purple velvet.

"Oh," said the girl softly, "how beautiful!"

She moved the case a little and the stones flashed in the sunlight.

"Try it on," he suggested; "see how it looks on your finger."

Josie had never before seen diamonds, and the temptation to look at them on her own hand was very great. She slipped the ring on her finger and held her hand in the sunshine, the old man watching her intently.

"It's pretty," he said, "isn't it? How well your hand looks with it on."

She moved her finger and the stones flashed again.

"What are you going to do with it?" she inquired.

"It's for a girl, Josie," he said eagerly,—"such a nice little girl that I am going to marry; she shall have that ring and other pretty things too, if she wishes, and she will be mistress of my house—my big house, Josie. Don't you envy her?"

"Not the house," said the girl, with a shiver; "it's damp and gloomy; I don't like it. I can imagine it in winter when the wind whistles through the cedars, and she sits alone in those great rooms—always alone, except for you. No, I don't like the house at all."

"But the ring," he said anxiously, "and the other beautiful things I can get for her. Silk dresses, Josie—think of it! and all the jewelry she wants. She is a lucky girl to have me ready and willing to do this for her, isn't she?"

Josie glanced again at the ring; her hand was in the shadow now, and the diamonds looked dull and cold. She suddenly understood the purport of the conversation, and the muscles of her throat contracted quickly.

"No, Mr. Poole," she said nervously, "I don't think she's lucky, and I don't envy her at all. I wouldn't be in her place for all the jewels in the world."

"Stop!" he said roughly, as she began to remove the ring, "stop! You don't know what you're saying. It's you I mean, Josie—you! I got that ring for you, and I'm going to marry you. I'm not so old as I look, and, after all, what does age matter? Better an old man's darling, you know. And I've always been popular with the girls; I know what they like, the pretty dears."

He came nearer and attempted to take her hand, but she jerked it impatiently away.

"I marry *you*!" she said with an incredulous laugh; "why, you must be joking; you're old enough to be my grandfather."

"She thinks she's teasing me," said the elderly Don Juan, addressing an inquisitive calf who poked its head over the fence at this inter-

esting moment. "She don't mean a word she says, and she's going to kiss me now, and thank me prettily for the ring."

He approached her again confidently, but Josie turned and fled, feeling sure that age and lack of breath would prevent her pursuit or capture. As she started she pulled the ring from her finger and threw it behind her; it fell in the dust at his feet.

IV.

INTO every girl's life comes, sooner or later, an awakening; she realizes that she was created to be loved and to love in return, and she accepts the situation quietly. There are women who confidently assert that the definition of love is happiness, but there are others who say it is suffering.

It is the latter who look pitifully at the girl just waking, wondering how soon the soft gladness shining in her eyes will disappear. They have not forgotten that they, themselves, once believed life a duet of pleasure, with long days full of sunshine; they remember also the nights which followed those days—endless nights, filled with anguish and regret. They feel once more the scalding tears which washed the gladness from their eyes and the bloom from their cheeks, and they pray she may be spared such nights.

To every man comes, at one time or another, a consciousness of power, which clothes him as a garment. He puts it on, perhaps, with his first long trousers, and continues to wear it while he lives. It is sometimes deeply shrouded in a cloak of humility, but it is never really forgotten; and the knowledge of this power must be very stimulating at times.

"Let me carry the basket," said Richard, "it is too heavy for you."

Josie willingly relinquished it, remarking:

"I did not know I had so many. Mother was making apple jelly, and I went out to pick up some more apples for her."

"I feel that I must apologize," said he after a moment, "for leaving you as I did this morning. I really do not know why I went, except that your father spoke in a very peremptory manner."

Josie frowned suddenly.

"Yes," she said, "it wasn't nice in you to leave me with that horrid old man."

"I did not want to go," he said quickly; "surely you don't think that?"

"Oh, I don't know, I'm sure," she replied carelessly.

Richard set the basket on the ground and faced her determinedly.

"Now," he said, "let us argue the question. You know in your heart I did not want to leave you, don't you?"

She picked a piece of golden-rod and fastened it in her dress, arranging it with great care.

"Don't you know it?" he persisted,—“don't you?”

Josie turned slowly aside, while the soft color in her cheeks deepened until a rosy flush overspread her entire face.

"Yes," she whispered, "I do know it."

"And now," he said, "you must give me that bit of golden-rod you are wearing. No, not that way; fasten it in my coat."

He stooped a little as she placed the flower in his button-hole.

"There," she said, looking up at him laughingly, "I forgive you for leaving me."

The gray eyes gazing down into the blue flashed suddenly; perhaps they read something there which pleased them. He took her hand in both of his and drew her gently towards him.

"I wish I might never leave you," he whispered.

"Josie," called Mrs. Farnaby at this point, "are you never coming with those apples?"

Thus rudely brought back to earth, Josie picked up her basket and started for the house, while Richard stood and looked after her retreating figure. He then took his handkerchief and mopped his brow thoroughly.

"If she had looked at me like that another minute," he reflected, "I wonder what I would have said or done?"

The boy who develops into a man without having run the gamut of emotions inspired by varying phases of the tender passion is rare indeed. Such boys do not, as a rule, make the most interesting men, although they doubtless lead very equitable lives.

Richard Bradley had been through many affairs of his own already; he could look back to the time when, as a small boy in knickerbockers, he had lost his heart to the flaxen pigtailed and rosy cheeks of the little girl across the way. He had, indeed, found it difficult to retain entire possession of that useful appendage since those early days. To be sure, it had often been returned to him, unharmed and quite as good as new, but he always generously bestowed it elsewhere as soon as possible. Very recently he had received it back from the young lady who stood third from the end in the chorus at the Gayety Theatre, and upon examination had found it uncracked, but a little shopworn, whereupon he resolved to keep it for his own exclusive use for a while at least. Now it was going again; he knew the symptoms well and felt them coming on.

"I will go down to the river," he said to himself, "and think it over. Perhaps I had better go home."

As he crossed the yard he encountered Anna Farnaby, leaning listlessly against the fence, and stopped to speak to her.

"I knew it was you," she said, "by your footstep."

"What sharp ears you have," he returned pleasantly.

"One should have quick ears when they must be eyes as well," she said quietly.

Something in her voice touched the young fellow, for she seldom referred to her affliction, but bore it patiently and cheerfully.

"What were you doing out here," he said, "all by yourself?"

"I was waiting for father," she replied; "I thought perhaps he would take me to the river,—he sometimes does,—and I am so tired of this yard. I know every inch of the fence and every piece of lichen on the trees as high as I can reach."

"Come with me," suggested Richard kindly; "I was going to the river when I met you."

The girl hesitated.

"I am afraid it is rather late," she said; "it is a long lane, you know, and I must be home in time to call father to his supper."

"But I know a short cut across the marsh," he insisted; "there is a good path and I can take you quite safely. Are you afraid to trust yourself to me?"

"Oh, no," she said quickly, "not at all afraid. I will come gladly."

She gave him her hand as she spoke, and he guided her through a gap in the fence and across the next field in silence.

"You have been very kind to me, Mr. Bradley," she said at last; "I don't know how to thank you."

"Do not try," he said gently, "I have done nothing at all."

"Do you call it nothing to read to me so often," said the blind girl, "and to explain passages that I cannot understand? The books you have read me have opened new worlds; they have given me something to think about besides myself and our misfortunes. Do you call that nothing?"

"I am very glad you like them," he replied; "it is a pleasure to me, I assure you, if I can in any way add to your happiness. Now, here is a ditch we must cross; it is rather broad, but there is a very strong, wide plank, so you need not be afraid. Give me both your hands and trust me not to let you slip. Are you ready? I will walk backward and hold on to you carefully."

"I know this ditch," said the girl as they reached the other side; "it is deep enough for father to keep his boat here for duck-shooting; and I know the path too, I think; it leads to old Mr. Poole's house, doesn't it?"

"I believe so. Now, a little pull up the bank, and here is the river. Let us sit down on this log and rest a while."

"Describe the river; how does it look this afternoon?"

"Very broad," he said, "very smooth and colorless. There is not even a ripple, and the sails are reflected as though it were a mirror."

"That means a storm," she said uneasily, "and the bank is weak—father said so. If it is not mended, the marsh will be flooded."

"How well you know your river," he said, smiling.

"I love it," she returned earnestly. "Whenever I can I come here, for it seems to call me. At night, when all is still, I can sometimes hear the waves lapping against the bank, and they often put me to sleep when I am wakeful. And yet," she added with a shiver, "I think I am a little afraid of it."

"It is a fine sheet of water," he said. "I am growing fond of it myself, I believe, although I have only been here a month; and yet, do you know, I was considering leaving it."

"You are going away?" she said blankly.

"I had a letter from my sister this morning," he resumed; "she thinks I should go home to my father; he is an old man, and she says he is lonely and needs me. We had a difference of opinion before I left, you know; that is the reason I came here."

"When do you go?"

"Why," he replied, tracing a word in the sand with a bit of stick, "I am not so sure that I shall go just yet. Something keeps me here."

"What," she said eagerly,— "what keeps you?"

"A girl's face," he answered as he added the final letter to the word "Josie" and threw the stick into the river.

"It must be a very pretty face," said the blind girl wistfully.

"It is," he replied, "quite the prettiest I have ever seen."

"Will you describe it to me."

"Imagine a wild rose," he said, "just opening, or the first bit of arbutus found on the sunny side of a hill in the early spring."

She looked directly at him, her great brown eyes dilating as though endeavoring to read his thoughts.

"Her name," she said,— "what is her name?"

"Oh," he replied, laughing a little, "I cannot tell you that just yet, though perhaps I may some time. I should think, though," he added after a moment, "that you might have guessed it."

She leaned forward, putting her hand on his arm.

"Her hair and eyes," she said breathlessly, "what color are they?"

"Her hair," said Richard with a second sudden burst of eloquence, "has caught the sunshine and imprisoned it, and her eyes are as blue as the sky."

The girl turned quickly towards the river, shivering slightly, as though the breeze had chilled her.

"What a lot of nonsense you have made me talk!" he exclaimed,

laughing uneasily; "forget all about it, please. Shall we finish our book this evening?"

"Let us go home," she said, rising slowly, "I am cold and tired. I think the sun has set."

That night Josie Farnaby found it impossible to sleep, so, creeping carefully out of bed that she might not disturb her sister, she went to the window and knelt before it, looking out on the fields, which showed white in the moonlight, and now and then pressing her hand to her hot cheeks. A sudden movement from the bed startled her.

"Anna," she whispered, "are you awake?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Where are you, Josie? Is anything the matter? Are you not well?"

"Yes," said Josie, "quite well, but restless; I could not sleep, so I got up and came to the window. I feel so happy to-night, Anna."

"Why to-night especially?"

"I don't know. At least I'm—not quite sure. Everything looks so beautiful outside, Anna. The moon shines full on the river until there is a path of gold across it. I can see the Jersey shore distinctly; even the trees look as I never saw them before, and the fields are flooded with light. How I wish you could see it too."

"Yes," said the blind girl with a quick sob, "it's all dark to me, Josie—very, very dark."

V.

THE moon which shone so brilliantly into Josie Farnaby's little room also struggled bravely to penetrate the thick branches of the evergreens which surrounded Silas Poole's dwelling, but merely succeeded in throwing a few feeble gleams of light, making the shadows seem all the larger and darker by contrast.

At a small table drawn up in front of the fireplace two men sat playing cards. In silence so intense that it could be felt they shuffled, dealt, and went on with the game, each considering his cards carefully before playing and furtively watching his opponent, as though distrustful of him. A decanter and some glasses were near at hand, while a kerosene lamp diffused light and odor impartially.

"Mine," cried Silas Poole exultantly as the last card fell,—
"mine!

"It was a fair game," he continued, gathering in the chips with trembling fingers; "you had as good a chance as I, but you lost—you lost."

"Yes, I lost," said the other slowly; "it was the house this time and I lost; there is nothing left."

Mr. Poole rose and went to a desk on the other side of the room, from the drawer of which he produced several bits of paper.

"See," he said, returning to the table, "here are your notes; I've kept them carefully and they date back to the night we began to play. First the marsh, you know; then the other fields, one by one; then the stock and barn; and now the house—all mine."

"Now the house," repeated Farnaby mechanically,—“all yours.”

"But the mortgage,—we almost forgot that; the mortgage I took to oblige you before we played our first game that night; you could not pay the interest, you remember,—how is that to be arranged? I seem to hold a mortgage on my own land. What are we to do about that?"

"I do not know," replied the unhappy man; "you cannot draw blood from a stone. I have no money; I have nothing that I can call my own after to-night."

"Yes, you have," cried the other excitedly; "that's just what I was coming to. You have something you call your own, but which I want to call *my* own. I can claim anything of yours in payment of a just debt, can't I?"

"I have no more property, you know that. What is it you want?"

"I want your daughter," said the old man quietly; "I mean to marry her."

They looked at each other in silence.

"Which daughter?" asked Farnaby at last.

"Which daughter!" repeated the other; "only hear him, *which* daughter! What should I want with a blind girl when I need someone to look after me? It's Josie I mean; pretty Josie, the image of her mother at her age; the time she used to go down the lane to meet——"

Farnaby struck the table heavily with his clinched fist.

"Stop," he cried, "none of that!"

An adventurous moth hovered too close over the lamp and was drawn down the chimney to its fate, causing the light to flicker suddenly. A mouse peeped out of the wainscoting and, finding itself unnoticed, ventured to scamper across the floor, its small feet making a scratching sound on the bare boards.

"Come," said Silas Poole at last, "no one shall say I'm not generous. I'll give you another chance; we will play again. If I win, I marry Josie and burn those bits of paper; if you win, I lose all, for I will stake everything I have ever gained from you, and you shall burn the notes and keep your daughter also. In either case you stand to win; it's not every man who would give you such a chance. Do you agree?"

The mouse had reached its destination and begun to gnaw a hole for itself.

"After all," he resumed, "what am I asking you to do? I can

give the girl a good home, which is more than she has at present, you know, and at my death she will be a rich woman. It's a chance most girls would jump at.

"If you do not agree," he continued, leaning forward that he might closely observe his companion,—"*if you do not agree*, Joseph Farnaby, then I take entire possession of everything, and you and your family may starve for all I care. The house and barn are not worth repairing; I shall pull them down, I think, and sell the land. The stock and furniture shall be sold by the sheriff, and the proceeds come to me. Where will you go—you and your wife, whom you don't speak to, and your daughter, blind through your fault? What will you do with them this winter?"

The clock on the mantel ticked loudly and monotonously on.

"Do you agree?" he persisted.

Joseph Farnaby suddenly rose to his feet and stood towering above the shrunken figure beside him.

"No!" he cried, starting for the door, "I'm damned if I do!"

Once outside in the frosty October air he mechanically turned in the direction of his home. Walking along the familiar path across the field his mind seemed a blank. He was conscious of no sensations whatever, but went steadily forward until he reached the river bank, where he stumbled over a log, upon which he sat down and gazed out upon the Delaware quivering and sparkling in the moonlight. It was the same log on which Richard Bradley and Anna had sat some hours earlier.

Mankind is capable of a large amount of endurance. Up to a certain point each succeeding affliction or misfortune makes a new wound, and in so doing causes the old ones to bleed afresh. After this point is reached, however, one's senses mercifully become numbed and, for a time at least, incapable of realizing anything more.

As he sat motionless Joseph Farnaby became aware of something bright in the sand at his feet which glittered in the moonlight, and he stooped to pick it up. It proved to be a small gold pin he had once given his daughter Anna and which she wore constantly. So Anna had been down by the river. The pin lay in the palm of his hand and he looked at it vaguely, wondering what she was doing there. As he gazed at the small, inanimate object, so full of the personality of its owner, his faculties began to awaken, and out of the chaos of his mind evolved a thought which finally became painfully distinct. What was it Silas Poole had said? Gradually the words returned to him, and he repeated them slowly.

"Your wife, whom you don't speak to, and your daughter, blind through your fault. What will you do with them this winter?"

What could he do with them? What could he? He turned and

looked behind him; brown in the flood of white light stood the little house, a poor enough place, perhaps, but a shelter, at all events. On each side sloped fields whose every foot of ground he knew and loved. He moved his hand, and the pin caught the moonlight again. Anna—what was to become of her? Where should he take her? Joseph Farnaby's love for his blind child was the loadstar of his existence. She was both his pleasure and a constant pricking of the thorn in the flesh, for he never forgot that he alone was responsible for her affliction. He had sworn that no matter what happened, she should be provided for and shielded in some manner, and now what was to become of her?

He wiped the drops of perspiration from his brow and looked once more at the house and farm. It could all be his again if he chose, and, after all, why not? Why should he have hesitated for a moment? If he won,—and he had a chance,—everything would adjust itself satisfactorily. If he lost,—well, it was a question of Josie's happiness, merely, against the welfare of the rest of the family. Josie's happiness or Anna's safety? There was no longer any doubt in his mind as to what course to pursue. When his daughters were weighed in the scale of his affection the balance was largely in favor of the younger girl. He would provide for both if he could; if not, Anna, his afflicted child, must be cared for and sheltered at all hazards.

He looked out over the shining expanse of the river. Josie's face was persistently before him, radiant with its new gladness, the cause of which he had begun to suspect, and Josie's eyes looked reproachfully at him as her mother's had looked once long ago. He thought of the house he had lately left and its master; he also remembered vaguely the fable of the spider and the fly. What sort of a life would she have with Silas Poole? What sort of a life?

The little pin again flashed suddenly as he moved his hand. Springing to his feet, he bared his head, raising his hand above him.

"O God," he cried, "if there is a God, send me luck to-night."

Only the waves of the Delaware broke the silence that followed as they lapped gently against the bank.

"Send me luck to-night," he repeated, "send me luck to-night."

Putting the pin carefully in his pocket, he turned and retraced his steps, walking swiftly until he arrived at the house he had lately quitted, which looked grim and inhospitable enough in the dense shade of the evergreens. Without knocking he opened the door and entered the room. The old man still sat beside the table, as he had done an hour previous.

"So," he said, "you have thought better of it."

"Yes," said Farnaby, "I agree. I have come to play."

"Before we begin," said the other, "there are a few things I should like to say.

"Your daughter," he resumed, motioning towards a chair, "does not look favorably upon me, strange to say. Only to-day I broached the matter to her and showed her the ring I got this morning, but she took to her heels and literally ran away from me; the ring I had bought she threw into the dirt. How do I know she will consent to the marriage?"

Joseph Farnaby's lower jaw slowly settled into an expression well known in his family circle.

"If I say so," he replied, "she will consent."

"Good; your powers of persuasion must be very great. Those bits of paper I spoke of are not destroyed, of course, until after the ceremony."

"You may not win."

"That is true," said Mr. Poole, "quite true, but this is my lucky night, I think. Shall we begin?"

"Not cards," said Farnaby quickly as his companion began to shuffle, "I have no luck with cards to-night. You have dice; let us throw and get it over. The best three out of five."

"No," said the old man, "the best two out of three."

He produced the dice as he spoke and handed them to his opponent, who threw a four and a deuce; Mr. Poole followed with an ace and a tray, while Farnaby threw double aces, and his companion double trays; with hands that trembled slightly Joseph Farnaby shook the box and threw, disclosing a four and a deuce; sure of his victory, Mr. Poole uncovered a five and an ace. Both men breathed quickly as they leaned over the table while Farnaby threw a five and a six. Silas Poole lifted his box from the dice and disclosed double sixes.

Rising, he went to the decanter and poured some whiskey into the glasses.

"Drink," he cried, thrusting the glass into his companion's hand, — "drink to the bride."

VI.

It is curious to observe the unreality of commonplace things when one again takes up one's life after passing through a crisis of vital importance. It seems as though the universe should be altered in some way, and one is vaguely surprised that the sun shines as usual and the daily duties stand waiting to be performed, unchanged from yesterday.

Joseph Farnaby went mechanically about the routine work of the farm on the day following the events described in the preceding chapter, pausing often, indeed, and occasionally lapsing into periods of abstraction which lasted a long time.

The day wore slowly away, and as evening approached he stood at the gate of the barnyard and looked towards the house. Mrs. Far-

naby and Anna sat on the doorstep facing him, while Jessie and Richard Bradley strolled slowly down the lane, apparently oblivious of everything but each other. His face darkened as he watched them disappear, and he turned again towards his wife and child on the doorstep.

"It has to be done," he said aloud; "they must know it some time, and I have got to tell them."

He laid his hand affectionately against the old gate, and lifted it up on its broken hinges.

"I will mend it to-morrow," he thought.

Fields sloped away to the river, and pastures stretched out before him rich in promises for the ensuing year.

"It will all be mine again," he said exultantly as he started for the house, "mine—all mine."

Mrs. Farnaby did not appear conscious of his approach, but Anna smiled and held out her hand.

"I knew your step, father," she said; "you are late in coming home this evening—too late for our walk, I'm afraid."

"Yes," he replied, "I forgot it. I am sorry, Anna."

Mrs. Farnaby rose and started into the house.

"Tell your mother, Anna," he said hastily, "to sit down again. I have something to say."

"Don't go, mother," said Anna gently, "father wants to talk to us."

Mrs. Farnaby resumed her seat, raising her faded eyes expectantly to her husband's face. He looked beyond her, as though unconscious of her presence, so she turned away towards the river, gazing vacantly out over its broad expanse.

"You know," he continued, addressing his daughter, "that I have been unfortunate and that I am deeply in debt. Little by little I have lost everything; even the house we live in belongs to Silas Poole."

Anna stroked his hand gently, while her mother made no sign of having heard or understood. He paused for a moment to note the effect of his words.

"Tell your mother," he said finally, "that I say we have lost everything. There is nothing left—nothing."

"Tell your father," said Mrs. Farnaby, without changing her position, "that I lost everything I cared for long ago."

"Last night, Anna," he resumed, "I went to Mr. Poole's; I often go there in the evening."

Mrs. Farnaby caught her breath quickly and seemed about to speak, but restrained herself with an effort.

"As I was saying," he continued, addressing his daughter, but watching his wife keenly meanwhile, "I went to Mr. Poole's. He told

me he intended to take possession at once; that he would sell the land and pull down the house and barn. I am powerless to oppose him; and if he should carry out his threat we shall be homeless."

"We will all be together, father," said Anna; "no matter what happens, we will not be separated."

"Tell your mother," he said distinctly, "that she may soon be homeless."

"Tell your father," said Mrs. Farnaby, without turning her head, "that I have not had a home for many years."

Silence ensued for a few minutes, while an enterprising hen escorted her brood through the yard towards the barn.

"But surely," ventured Anna at last, "Mr. Poole would not turn us out. What have we ever done to him that he should be so cruel?"

"Ah," said her father significantly, "what, indeed?"

A dull red spot shone in Mrs. Farnaby's pale cheek, but she continued to gaze stolidly out over the river.

"Mr. Poole, Anna," resumed Farnaby, "after telling me what he could and would do, all of which I knew before, proposed a very easy and simple way out of the difficulty. He is willing to destroy my notes and give me back my land on condition that Josie marries him."

Mrs. Farnaby started to her feet and stood looking at her husband incredulously.

"Tell your mother, Anna," he said, raising his voice and speaking very emphatically, "that Mr. Poole desires to marry Josie, and I have given my consent."

Mrs. Farnaby sank down on the step again, covering her face with her hands.

"The sins of the fathers," she whispered,—*"the sins of the fathers—and of the mothers—shall be visited on the children."*

"Does Josie know," inquired Anna, after a long pause, "and is she willing?"

"I have not told her yet," replied her father, "but it does not matter whether she is willing or not; she must do it."

"Ask your father, Anna," said Mrs. Farnaby with trembling lips, "if there is no other way?"

The river shone intensely blue, with white sails glistening in the afternoon sunshine. A dark line of smoke was plainly visible on the Jersey shore as an engine hurried along, dragging its loaded cars after it. Mrs. Farnaby raised her head and looked at her husband. She appeared to be trying to address him directly; twice she moistened her dry lips and seemed about to speak, but there was no answering gleam of recognition in the eyes which looked through her and beyond her, so she turned to her daughter.

"Tell your father," she said, "that this marriage shall not take place. I will not give my consent."

"Tell your mother, Anna," said Mr. Farnaby slowly, "that her consent is immaterial."

He walked away as he spoke to meet Josie and Richard Bradley, who were returning to the house. After a few words the young man raised his hat and left them. Mrs. Farnaby watched the little scene breathlessly.

"He is going to tell her now," she said; "it will break her heart; and I can do nothing—nothing. If I could only talk to him, only explain."

"Mother," said Anna, "why don't you go straight to father and talk to him yourself. I am sure he would listen to you."

"We swore," said Mrs. Farnaby dully, "sixteen years in November it is since we put our hands on the Bible and swore never to speak to each other again. Sixteen years, and we have never once exchanged a word; sixteen years——"

"I would break my oath," said Anna; "it is all wrong and it should be broken."

"You don't know your father as I do," said her mother; "many and many a time I've tried to speak to him and beg him to let bygones be bygones; often and often the words have trembled on my lips, but when he looks through me as though he didn't see me, as he did just now, I cannot make a sound, no matter how I try."

Anna sighed heavily. Things were very wrong indeed, it seemed, in her small world—quite beyond her power to remedy.

Mrs. Farnaby began to sob hopelessly.

"Think of my life," she said; "imagine what it has been. Think of Josie's life with that old man; think of her young life—ruined because of me."

"She has begun to love Mr. Bradley," continued the miserable woman, "I am sure of it; and she might be so happy, for he loves her, I think."

"Yes," said Anna, "I think so too, mother."

"Perhaps," suggested Anna hopefully, after a long silence, "perhaps Mr. Poole will not insist when he finds Josie loves someone else."

"For that very reason," replied her mother, "he will insist all the more."

"Anna," she continued in a whisper, glancing furtively about her as she spoke, "how did your father get so completely in this man's power? Do you know? He talks to you; did he never tell you about it? Are you sure you know nothing more than we heard just now?"

"Quite sure, mother."

Mrs. Farnaby rose and entered the house; in a little while she returned with a new light in her eyes and a flush on her cheek.

"Anna," she said, laying her hand on her daughter's shoulder and speaking very earnestly, "Josie's life must not be ruined. There is but one thing for her to do, and you and I must help her. She must run away."

VII.

THE congregation of the Red Lion church were about to give their minister the annual donation party. These parties were an established custom throughout the countryside, and being generally held in the autumn, were supposed to help that unfortunate man get through the winter comfortably, for his salary was, as a rule, totally inadequate to provide more than the barest necessities of life. As a matter of fact, however, experience had taught him to look forward to these occasions with anything but cheerful anticipations.

"If we come out as badly as we did last year in Glasgow," he remarked to his patient and long-suffering wife, "I'm sure I don't know what is to become of us. Will there be sufficient coffee to go around?"

Mrs. Strong was still young enough to extract some pleasure even from a donation party. At the mention of Glasgow she laughed hysterically.

"Oh, *do* you remember the Jones family," she said, "how it took Mr. and Mrs. Jones and six children to bring a pound of brown sugar?"

Mr. Strong assumed his ministerial expression.

"No doubt, Emma, it was all they could afford," he said gravely. "Let every man give as the Lord hath prospered him."

"The six children," she continued, without regarding the interruption, "immediately demanded bread and butter, leaving what they couldn't eat on the parlor carpet, and Mrs. Jones as she went home said that when the wind howled around the parsonage winter nights she hoped we would not forget that they had done their mite to make us comfortable. You said we would remember them, and I fulfilled the promise when I scraped the carpet."

"But the coffee?" said Mr. Strong anxiously. "We are expected to supply hot coffee, you know. Is there enough?"

Mrs. Strong made a gesture of despair.

"Mrs. Catherine Wilkins," she said, "accompanied by half a dozen eggs, arrived an hour ago. She demanded the key of the pantry and said she meant to take all responsibility from my shoulders. Coffee is now being made in the wash-boiler and, if my nose does not deceive me, crullers are frying by the score."

"It is kindly meant," said the minister in feeble defence of his flock. "We should look at the motive, my dear."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Strong impatiently, "we look at the motive, but we *feel* the effect, and that is more important in the long run."

Out in the kitchen Mrs. Wilkins, with her skirt turned up around her waist and a towel pinned over the front of her dress, was a very busy and important person.

"Now, Eda," she remarked to the small colored girl she had brought with her, "fly round lively and get the cream; we'll need all we can find, I reckon. Laws! you don't mean to say that one little crock is all the milk there is set to raise? Looks as if Mis. Strong was a *leetle* mite shiftless, don't it? Why, how d'y'e do, Mis. Smithers? I'm right down glad to see you, for I'm clean drove to death out here. If you'll jest lend a hand and turn them crullers a bit I'll look fur the powdered sugar. Many people come?"

"Right smart," returned Mrs. Smithers, deftly dropping bits of dough into the boiling lard; "the Crane fam'ly come in as I did. They brought a real handsome motto, 'God Bless Our Home;' July Crane worked it; she's right handy with her needle."

"You don't say!" said Mrs. Wilkins admiringly. "That'll be nice fur the space between the parlor winders, won't it?"

"Mercy on us," exclaimed Mrs. Smithers, "if here don't come the Wilsons with that tribe of tow-headed boys o' theirs! Might jest as well try to empty the Delaware with a thimble as to fill up them young'uns on cakes and coffee. What did they bring?"

Mrs. Wilkins reconnoitered.

"As near as I can make out," she reported, "it's a jug of molasses, but I ain't sure; maybe it's vinegar."

Mrs. Smithers began to pile up the crullers on large platters, while Mrs. Wilkins rolled out a fresh supply. Several other ladies dropped in to assist, and conversation became general.

Mr. and Mrs. Strong received their guests with smiling faces and sinking hearts as they contemplated the fast-filling rooms and the table where the presents were deposited, which did not yet appear to be overcrowded.

"The Lord be with you, Brother Strong," remarked Mr. Richards, the blacksmith, producing a bottle of extract of vanilla. "I got this here trifle in New Castle, thinkin' Mis. Strong might find it handy when makin' cake; you can't git it in Red Lion, y'know."

Mrs. Strong expressed her gratitude in fitting terms.

"I thought a bag o' flour mightn't come amiss, Brother Strong," said Mr. Smiley, the miller, depositing it in a red plush armchair, the pride of the parsonage, which had been presented by the Mite Society of the Glasgow church, and which stood beside the table.

"That was truly kind in you, Brother Smiley," said Mr. Strong gratefully.

"Not at all, not at all," responded the miller, removing his coat and upsetting in so doing the jug of molasses brought by the Wilsons, which rolled to the edge of the table and proceeded to drip slowly over the plush chair, entirely unnoticed by anyone.

"I declare to goodness," said the Widow Grimes, arriving breathlessly, "I do feel clean tuckered out; it's a long pull up that hill. James sez to me, 'Mother,' sez he, 'better have the old blind sorrel hitched up,' sez he, but I thought I'd try walkin'. Brother Strong, how are you? Here's my mite, and wishin' it was more."

She deposited a can of tomatoes on the table.

"I ain't so young as I onct was," she continued, "and that pull up the hill has fairly took my breath. Reckon I'll feel all right after I set a spell."

She subsided heavily into the armchair as she spoke, landing squarely on the paper bag of flour, which naturally burst and rose in clouds around the astonished lady. She was assisted to her feet and borne off upstairs to recuperate, while the Strong's ruefully contemplated the paste of flour and molasses spread over their cherished chair.

In the kitchen crullers spluttered cheerfully, and conversation grew very brisk.

"Does anybody know," inquired Mrs. Smithers, as she refreshed herself with a cup of coffee, "if word was sent to the Farnabys about the donation party?"

"No, it wasn't," said Mrs. Wilkins emphatically. "What would have been the use, I'd like to know?"

No one ventured to reply, but a small woman engaged in grinding coffee remarked that she heard Silas Poole had sent a ton of coal and intended coming himself.

"I seen him the other day," she remarked, "walkin' down the State Road with Josie Farnaby, and I heard——"

"Did you?" said Mrs. Wilkins mysteriously. "You don't say! So did I."

"What did you hear?" inquired Mrs. Smithers eagerly.

"Well," said Mrs. Wilkins as she cut out the last of the crullers, "I ain't a-sayin' it, but they *do* say old Si Poole's goin' to marry Josie Farnaby."

"For the land's sake!" exclaimed Mrs. Smithers, almost dropping the saucer from which she was sipping with much enjoyment.

Mrs. Wilkins nodded emphatically.

"And what's more," she continued, "Josie, she's been keepin' company with the school-teacher (I've seen 'em myself lallygaggin' round the fields together), and she's got her head so chuck full of him she won't look at nobody else."

"But," said Mrs. Smithers, becoming slightly confused, "I thought you said she was goin' to marry Si Poole?"

"Well, so she is, and why? 'Cause her father makes her, that's why. He's a hard man, Joe Farnaby is, and they say Si Poole said he'd foreclose the mortgage if he couldn't get her any other way. That's what Josh heard at the post-office last night, but don't say nothin' about it, will you?"

All the ladies present vowed secrecy, each, however, making a mental reservation in favor of an absent friend.

"When Joe Farnaby come home," continued Mrs. Wilkins, "and sez to Josie she'd got to marry Silas Poole, she up and told him to his face she wouldn't do it and he couldn't make her. Then in comes young Bradley (you know he boards there), and sez as how Josie's goin' to marry *him*, and he reckoned he could look out for her as well as Si Poole, if not a leetle mite better."

"What'd Joe Farnaby say to that?" inquired Mrs. Smithers breathlessly.

"Laws!" returned Mrs. Wilkins as she rubbed the last remnant of dough from her hands, "he jest turned Mr. Bradley out of the house, bag and baggage, and he's stayin' at the Barnetts, over by Bear Station."

"And Josie?"

"Well, I dunno nothing more, except that old man Poole sent a ton of coal to Brother Strong, and said he'd be callin' on him later fur help in tyin' a knot of some sort."

"Well—I—never!" chorussed Mrs. Smithers and the rest of the company.

"Mind," said Mrs. Wilkins impressively, "I ain't a-sayin' it, but that's what they tell *me*. Now then, Eda, p'ur off the coffee and dish up them crullers. Reckon it's time to hand 'em round."

"On such an occasion as this, Brother Strong," remarked the miller as he balanced a cup of coffee in one hand and a plate of crullers in the other, "it must be pleasant to you, as a shepherd, to see the sperrit of unity and brotherly love prevailin' among your flock. There is even Brother Silas Poole. Long as I've lived in Red Lion, I never seen him at a donation party before."

Mr. Strong replied that it was indeed gratifying, while Mrs. Strong kept an anxious eye on the cup of coffee, which tilted dangerously at times.

A sudden knock at the door caused a pause in the hum of conversation. It was the custom at Red Lion to walk straight in at a donation party, not ask for admission. Mrs. Strong went out into the hall to open the door. She returned in a few minutes and beckoned to her husband.

"What is it, Emma?" he inquired anxiously. "I hope nothing has happened."

"It is Mr. Bradley and Josie Farnaby," she returned as she drew him into the hall; "they want you to marry them, John, and I hope you will not refuse."

"I do not understand——" began the bewildered man.

"Surely," interrupted Richard impatiently, "it is a very simple matter. I wish to marry Miss Farnaby, and she consents. We have come to ask you to perform the ceremony. That is all."

"But I thought," said Mr. Strong,— "that is, I was told by Mr. Poole——"

"John," said Mrs. Strong as she put her arm about the trembling girl, "do as they ask you. Would any girl, of her own free will, marry that old man? Could you reconcile it to your conscience to condemn her to such a life? This is natural; it is right. This is love—I am sure of it."

"I do not like it," said the minister; "it is a marriage without the knowledge and consent of her parents. I should prefer to have nothing to do with it."

"Mother knows," said Josie. "She would have come with us if it had been possible. She said it was the only thing left us, and she helped me to get away."

"John," urged Mrs. Strong, "this child's happiness lies in your hands; do not hesitate any longer."

"There must be two witnesses," said Mr. Strong slowly.

Now, in Red Lion it is difficult to say anything that is not overheard by someone, no matter how softly it is spoken; or to go anywhere, be it ever so quietly, that it is not immediately known throughout the surrounding country. This may seem strange to the uninitiated, because of the widely separated dwellings and generous amount of space available, but it is, nevertheless, a fact which will be vouched for by those who have for any reason tried to hide their light temporarily under a bushel. Therefore it is not surprising that Josie Farnaby's presence in the parsonage that evening, and the cause thereof, was whispered from one to another until it finally reached the ears of Silas Poole, who was inspecting the articles donated under the able supervision of Mrs. Wilkins.

"Them little bead mats," she was remarking, "was brought by the Barneses. Beulah, she made 'em; she works lovely——"

Here the Widow Grimes approached and hastily whispered something which caused Mrs. Wilkins to leave her sentence unfinished and stare at her companion as though he were some new and wonderful species of wild beast. Mr. Poole put down the mats, which he was examining through his glasses with much apparent interest, and trans-

ferred his attention to Mrs. Wilkins's countenance, which was just then quite expressive.

"You seem surprised," he remarked at last.

Mrs. Wilkins caught her breath.

"Surprised," she echoed; "that ain't the right word. Surprised!"

"What has happened?"

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Wilkins, edging slowly away from him, "if you don't know it ain't fur me to tell you. Only to think of them fixin' on to-night to run off, and us all gathered here fur such a different purpose. She's only doin' what her mother done before her, after all; them sorts of things runs in the blood, they say. Only to think of us all bein' here to-night! I wouldn't have believed it if anybody'd told me, that's what I wouldn't!"

"Woman," said Mr. Poole, catching her by the arm, "explain yourself. Who has run away?"

"And him comin' into our midst from a strange place," she continued, "and settin' to work to bewitch her till she don't care nothin' fur nobody else. Oh, it's a queer world!"

"Who is it you mean?" he said, his fingers tightening on the stout arm. "I insist on knowing the name. Who is it?"

"Why," said Mrs. Wilkins volubly, "who should it be but Josie Farnaby and the school-teacher? They've come here to get married, and Brother Strong he wants witnesses to the ceremony. I ain't a-sayin' it, of course, but that's what they tell *me*."

Mr. Poole released Mrs. Wilkins, who rubbed her arm indignantly, and elbowed his way through the guests to the hall.

"It is against my better judgment," said the minister, "and I feel I am wrong in allowing myself to be over-persuaded. You are both too young to realize what a very serious step you are taking. However, if you have definitely made up your minds, I would rather you were safely married before you leave my house. Please take your places."

The door leading into the parlor opened abruptly to admit Silas Poole.

"Stop!" he commanded. "Do you know what you are doing? This girl is a minor," he continued; "it is not lawful for her to marry without the consent of her parents."

"How old are you?" said Mr. Strong, turning to Josie.

"Nineteen last July," she replied.

"By the law of Delaware a girl is of age when she reaches her eighteenth year," said Mr. Strong gravely. "I must ask you, Mr. Poole, not to interrupt unless your objections are more valid."

"Have you examined his license?" inquired Mr. Poole imper turbably.

"I have neglected to ask to see your license," said Mr. Strong,

turning courteously to Richard. "I should have done so, of course, although, no doubt, it is quite correct. Will you show it to me? It is a mere matter of form, you know."

There was a moment's pause, while all eyes were turned on the young man, who had grown very pale.

"I—I have no license," he said at last; "I did not know it was necessary."

"By the law of Delaware," said Mr. Poole to the clergyman, "a license is necessary for a legal marriage."

"It is true," said Mr. Strong, "quite true. I am powerless. How is it, Mr. Bradley, that you have neglected such an important thing? I scarcely understand your position in the case, and I must, of course, decline to perform the ceremony."

"I did not know it was necessary," repeated Richard very miserably; "not being a native of Delaware, I am not familiar with its laws. I have never been married before, you see, and I did not know all that was expected of me. I have a ring, of course. It is important we should be married to-night. Mr. Strong, I hope you will not refuse us this favor, and I will take out the license to-morrow. On my honor."

"It would be well to acquaint yourself with the laws of a State, Mr. Bradley, before taking such a serious step within its boundaries," said Mr. Strong somewhat severely. "I must again decline to oblige you."

"John," said Mrs. Strong sorrowfully, "will you do nothing for them?"

"There is nothing I can do."

"Under the circumstances," remarked Mr. Poole, "it would appear best that Miss Farnaby should return to her father's house. I am going that way and shall be glad to escort her."

"I will not go," said Josie defiantly; "you cannot make me."

"Josie," said Mrs. Strong gently, "you cannot, of course, go away with Mr. Bradley until he is authorized by law to marry you. Would you like to stay here with me? You will be very welcome, dear, and to-morrow he will get this troublesome license and it will be all right; or, will you go home to your mother?"

"It will be better for all concerned if you come home with me," said Mr. Poole, "especially for your mother."

"Josie," said Richard, "don't go. Come with me; we will drive to Wilmington to-night, and in the morning—"

"Wherever you go you will be followed," interrupted Mr. Poole, addressing the bewildered girl. "You know your father's disposition. Do you want harm to befall this man who pretends to love you? Do you wish to be the cause of bloodshed, perhaps murder? It is in your hands."

"Josie," appealed Richard again, "don't listen to him. Come with me."

"Oh Richard!" said Josie, with a burst of tears, "he is right, he is indeed. I must go home. You do not know my father; he stops at nothing to carry his point. I love you, and I will never marry anyone else, but to-night I must go home."

"She is right," said Mr. Strong, "she must go home."

"Come, then," said Mr. Poole, "my carriage is outside."

"Wait," said Mrs. Strong quickly, "I am coming with her, and I will take care of her, Mr. Bradley. Do you think, Mr. Poole, knowing you as I do, that I believe you disinterested in this matter? Do you think I would trust you to take this child safely home?"

"As you please," he returned, with a shrug of his shoulders.

Mrs. Strong wrapped herself in a shawl and put her arm about Josie.

"Come, dear," she said, "come with me. Mr. Poole, we are quite ready."

VIII.

WHEN one has lived for many years in close contact with a more powerful will and keener intellect, it is almost invariably the case that the stronger personality dominates the weaker, until at last the latter becomes merged into the former and degenerates into a mere echo, rarely, if ever, originating an idea or venturing to express an independent opinion.

Occasionally, however, the weaker nature suddenly rebels and does a little thinking on its own account. Perhaps it is even spurred into decisive action if the provocation is very great, but such independence is merely a temporary fluttering of the spirit—a last beating of the wings, as it were, against the relentless bars of the cage, only to sink again into apathy, convinced of the impossibility of regaining liberty and tired out by the attempt.

Mrs. Farnaby was going out. Disregarding the curiosity of her household, she made her toilet, putting on the best she had and surveying herself with much disgust when finally arrayed. It was a pathetic little figure her glass reflected, whose rusty black gown hung loosely upon the shrunken form, with eyes whose color had long ago grown blurred and indistinct, the result of many tears, and small, trembling hands, delicately formed, but roughened and coarsened by much hard work.

Mrs. Farnaby was going out. For sixteen years she had not once passed beyond the boundary of the farm; not once entered a carriage or crossed a threshold other than the place she called home. To-day, however, she had told Josephus to put the gray mare to the buggy, and to have it ready at three o'clock. When the boy had expressed

surprise and asked where she was going, she had sharply bid him to hold his tongue and do as he was told, and he had obeyed her, wondering greatly.

She drove slowly along, regardless alike of the beauty of the day and the surprised faces of the few neighbors she chanced to meet. Mrs. Farnaby composedly driving herself along the public road was a sight to cause conversation and conjecture in Red Lion for some time to come.

One must be preoccupied indeed to drive along what is called the river road in Delaware of an autumn afternoon and remain unconscious of one's surroundings. Small white clouds hurry across a sky whose intense blue is gradually merged into the wonderful purple haze which bounds the horizon on every side; in the glow of the descending sun, leaves, which by morning light hang limply to the trees, dull red or hopelessly dead and yellow, blaze with a glory of scarlet and gold, while long, black shadows fling themselves across any available surface.

Then too there is the river, reproducing the blue of the sky. No true Delawarean who has lived on its shores can forget it. In memory one sees it again and yet again, looking across meadows where red and white cattle pasture, and marshes where late marigolds continue to bloom in spite of frosty nights. One sees the white sails; the Jersey shore, plainly visible in some places, hazy and indefinite in others, and the gray ramparts of the old fort, behind which the moon will soon be rising. Flocks of birds are speeding southward, while crows call to one another as they search the cornfields for a few forgotten grains. One's lot in life may be cast in the city, with every moment fully occupied and little time for retrospection, but when autumn comes, with its golden lights and long shadows, one remembers and wants to be at home again.

Turning aside from the main road Mrs. Farnaby proceeded down a long lane bordered by tall evergreens until she reached a large brick house, whose windows and doors were inhospitably closed, as though to discourage chance visitors. Having fastened the gray mare, she made her way around to the back of the house, where some signs of life were apparent, and knocked at the door. After a little delay it was opened by Mr. Poole himself. They looked at each other for a moment in silence.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," he said at last. "Will you come in?"

She entered and seated herself on the extreme edge of a chair, pulling nervously at the fingers of her gray cotton gloves.

"It is a fine day," he remarked, after waiting in vain for her to speak.

She slowly raised her faded blue eyes and looked directly at him.

"Silas," she said tremulously, "why did you do it?"

"Is there any reason," he inquired, without any pretence at not understanding her, "why I should not get married if I want to?"

"No," she said quickly,— "no, of course not. But not Josie; she's too young. She does not love you, Silas. She would not make you happy, and she would be miserable herself."

"Do you think," he said, looking steadily at her, "that I care whether she is miserable or not? Has my life for the past twenty-five years been such that I should study the happiness of others? If through her I can reach you, it is enough."

The rusty black bonnet drooped still lower.

"I was wrong," she whispered; "I did you a great injury, but surely you have been revenged. You ruined my life long ago, let that satisfy you; don't visit the sins of the guilty upon the innocent."

"And my life," he said, "what of that?"

She did not reply.

"Come," he said, rising and opening a door,— "come with me."

She followed him into the adjoining room, which was dark and musty from long disuse. He opened a window, letting in a ray of sunshine.

"This," he said, indicating the carpet with its large, many-colored bunches of flowers, "is the carpet you admired once when I drove you to Wilmington; I went back next day and bought it. Here is the green sofa you thought would wear well and which had such a comfortable back; do you recognize it? There are the footstools you thought would just fit the space each side of the fireplace; how do you like them?"

He pushed them contemptuously aside with his foot and unlocked a drawer in a cabinet which stood between the windows.

"And this," he said, producing a faded velvet case, "do you know who it is?"

He opened the case, disclosing the daguerreotype of a young girl. But for the difference in dress and arrangement of the hair, it might have been Josie Farnaby who smiled at him from the little, old picture; it bore but slight resemblance to the prematurely aged woman at his side, whose eyes and lips had long ago forgotten how to smile.

"Do you know who it is?" he repeated.

"It is a girl," she said slowly, "who was foolish,—wicked, if you like,—who once did you a great injury which caused you, perhaps, to suffer, but who has repented and suffered much herself. A girl to whom you once were very good; a girl you loved."

He held the picture at arm's length and looked at it critically.

"It is the woman who ruined my life," he said, "who destroyed my

faith in humanity, and made me the laughing-stock of the country. The woman who used me as long as she needed me, then threw me aside like an old glove. A woman I shall never forgive."

"Do you remember the day that picture was taken?" she asked.

He said he remembered it very well.

"You had driven me to Wilmington; I wore a pink dress, and you said you liked it."

She paused a moment, and then resumed.

"You said you must have a picture of me in that dress, because you would like to have me always near you as I was that morning."

"As I *thought* you were," he said; "put it that way."

"So you had the picture taken," she continued, "and afterwards we went shopping and had lunch together. We got home just in time for the dance in your new barn. I wore pink still."

"No, you didn't," he interrupted, "you wore white,—thin white,—and you had cornflowers in your hair, the color of your eyes."

"Silas," she said, laying her small, trembling hand on his arm, "if you have any memory of those old days that is not bitter; if when you think of Josie she recalls in any way the girl whose picture you have kept all these years, then, for the sake of that girl, be merciful to her child."

He turned again to the cabinet and opened the drawer.

"I am not asking you to forgive me," she continued, "I know how useless that would be, but I have come to beg you not to insist on this marriage. You were old for me, Silas; you often said so. Think what you must seem to her."

He had found what he wanted and held out his hand, in the palm of which lay a plain gold ring.

"Oh," she cried, "I did not know——"

"Do you know what this is?" he asked.

"I did not know," she repeated faintly, "I am sorry——"

"Look inside," he resumed; "you will find your initials and mine, and a date. Can you guess what it is?"

"The day I bought that ring," he said slowly, "you met Joseph Farnaby in Philadelphia and married him."

"I loved him," she said in feeble defence; "I could not help it."

"That night when I came home and found your note, I put everything connected with you into this room and closed the windows, shutting out light and air. I took this ring in my hand and vowed that you should live to repent what you had done. Have I kept my word?"

She sat down helplessly, covering her face with her hands.

"You filled my husband's mind with unjust suspicions," she said finally; "he believed I was untrue to him—I, who loved him better than my life."

"Your husband, knowing how you had treated me, knew also that what a woman has once done she will do again if she gets a chance. He followed you one evening, at my suggestion, and saw you put a letter under the stone by the gate, taking one away in exchange."

"It was to Mary," she said, "your sister and my friend. You would not let her speak to me, and when she married and went away we wrote to say good-by. You knew that all the time."

"For three nights," he went on, "your husband followed you and saw the same thing. Then he demanded the letters, accusing you of being unfaithful. You were angry at his suspicions and refused to show them, burning them before him. In the quarrel which followed you said you would never speak to him again, and he made you swear it on the Bible, taking a similar vow himself. When your anger cooled you tried to explain, but he would not listen; you learned the meaning of an oath and were unhappy. Then I scored my first point; I have been scoring ever since."

"You have got the land," she said, "and the house—everything we own,—I heard of that just lately,—but you will never have the child. You do not know Josie. She has my face, perhaps, but she's her father's child for all that, and once she makes up her mind nothing moves her. I found that out when she was a baby, and to-day I am glad it is so."

She moved slowly towards the door as she spoke, but turned suddenly with a last appeal.

"Silas," she said, "I am willing to suffer myself. I am used to being unhappy, and a little more or less does not matter. But she is young, and she has done you no harm. Last night you brought her home, but I shall try and help her get away again. You may turn us out if you like; I suppose you will do it, and I do not care, except for Anna. I would rather go to the almshouse than have Josie's life ruined because of my fault."

Mrs. Farnaby had unconsciously straightened her bent shoulders while making her little speech. A faint color came to her pale face, while the light of determination which shone from her eyes seemed to restore their blue once more. Mr. Poole looked at her in surprise.

"Jennie," he said quietly, using her name for the first time, "what a pretty girl you were."

When a man and a woman, contemporaries and past middle age, are engaged in an argument and he suddenly becomes retrospective about her personal appearance, interpolating involuntary remarks concerning it, she feels reasonably sure of carrying her point. Mrs. Farnaby began to believe that her visit had not been in vain.

"You were kind enough to think so, Silas," she replied, "and I remember how good you were to me and how gentle."

"Was I good to you?"

"Indeed you were, and though I made you a poor return, you will be good again. God knows I have repented. Will you promise what I ask? It is the last time I shall trouble you."

"No," he said, with a quick revulsion of feeling, "I will not."

"This one thing," she persisted; "it is not much to ask. If you loved me once, you cannot really hate me now."

"Aye, and what did I love? A pink-and-white complexion; blue eyes that lied to me; lips that belonged to another man: a creature that seemingly was all innocence, but without heart, without truth, without honor. Yes, I loved you. Men are fools."

Mrs. Farnaby walked slowly to her carriage; she had failed, and she knew it. For some reason best known to himself Mr. Poole accompanied her, unfastening the horse and otherwise assisting at her departure.

"It isn't the men who are fools," she said as she took up the reins, "it is the women that listen to them."

The gray mare made her way leisurely home as she thought best; she was not coerced or directed in any way, but she was quite familiar with the road and intended to turn in at the proper gateway, even if the reins did hang loosely over her broad back and no indication whatever was given of her driver's desires.

Mrs. Farnaby sank into a corner of the buggy in a state of mental collapse. As long as she could be seen by Silas Poole she had sat erect and held her head high, but as the distance between them increased she realized the futility of her expedition and knew she had made a mistake. It seemed to her she generally made mistakes, and that trying to correct them was the greatest blunder of all. It was like a skein of knotted thread: the more one worked over it the worse it got.

With a proud consciousness of duty accomplished, the gray mare drew up before the kitchen door. Anna sat upon the doorstep while her father leaned moodily against the house beside her. He watched his wife descend from the buggy and walk up the path towards them in silence. As she was about to enter the house, however, he put his arm across the doorway and stopped her.

"Anna," he said, "ask your mother where she's been."

Mrs. Farnaby summoned the last spark of the resolution and rebellion that had sustained her during the afternoon. With a sudden angry gesture she pushed aside the arm that barred her passage and entered the kitchen. Then she turned and addressed her daughter.

"Tell your father," she said, "that I went out to attend to some business."

She disappeared inside the house, and he turned to his daughter uneasily.

"Where has she been?" he inquired.

But Anna could tell him nothing. Mrs. Farnaby had confided her destination to none but the gray mare, who could be trusted not to betray the confidence.

"It is not possible," he said to himself, as he followed his wife into the house, "that she went—no, she would never do that."

Mrs. Farnaby moved about the room with tightly compressed lips and head rather more erect than usual, while her husband watched her morosely, yet with interest not unmixed with curiosity. Where had she been, and why did she go? Apparently she did not intend to be communicative on the subject, and yet he meant to know. He would inquire again. He looked around for a medium through which to address her, but there was no one near except the cat, which was carefully washing its face in the window, so he was forced to be silent.

His wife was quite aware of the new expression in the eyes which followed her wherever she went, and also of the reason thereof, and it caused her heart to flutter strangely.

"He's going to speak," she thought; "he is going to ask me himself where I went, and then I'll tell him everything."

She went into the next room and sat down to try and regain her composure. On the table beside her was a large family Bible of the type found in many country parlors at that time. She opened it mechanically and a folded paper fell out; it was her marriage certificate.

"Twenty-five years ago to-day," she said as she smoothed the paper,—*"twenty-five years ago to-day. Our silver wedding anniversary."*

She leaned back in her chair, looking blankly at the certificate and thinking of the first years of her married life, before the silence had come between them; after a while she drew her wedding-ring from her finger and looked at it wistfully, absorbed in thought.

"I'll try, anyhow," she said aloud; "he must remember what day it is."

She returned to the kitchen, carrying the marriage certificate and ring. Her husband sat where she had left him, but the light had gone from his eyes and he did not appear to notice her entrance. Mrs. Farnaby crossed the room, still with the unaccustomed flush upon her face, and stood beside him. Putting out her hand, she timidly let it rest upon his arm, but it might have been a stone she touched; going directly in front of him, she laid the certificate upon his knee, pointing to the date and the day of the month; then, very slowly and with trembling hand, held her wedding-ring towards him and extended the third finger of her left hand. For a full minute she stood thus and waited, her eyes fixed upon his face.

Joseph Farnaby rose to his feet, allowing the paper on his knee to fall unheeded to the ground; oblivious to the figure before him, he walked directly out of the room without one backward glance. Mrs. Farnaby stooped and picked up the certificate, restored it to its long resting-place in the big Bible, and herself replaced her wedding-ring. Then she returned to her household duties, but the flush had faded from her cheek, and her step was again slow and spiritless.

"Anna," she said at last, in her usual dull monotone, "tell your father supper's ready."

IX.

THE farmers along the banks of the Delaware were burning marsh. It was necessary that the coarse tufts of grass left untouched by the cattle should be destroyed before cold weather, in order that the pasture next spring might be green and fertile; therefore the dead, dry grass must be burnt off, and this was the appointed time.

A pungent odor of smoke permeated the frosty night air, and all along the shores of the river blazing fields might be seen, with dark figures of men and boys sharply silhouetted against the red background as they jumped from tussock to tussock, applying torch or match to a new place or beating a hasty retreat before an unexpected tongue of flame. The New Jersey farmers were also busy at the same work. Far away across the broad expanse of water a line of fire followed the river, bordering its course and sending little flames upward now and then, which showed bright against the dark sky. And between these brilliant borders flowed the river, dark to-night and sullen, with no path of silver light across it, and no little, white-crested waves rippling merrily wherever the eye could reach.

Richard Bradley sat on the bank and looked out over the black water at the edge of fire on the opposite shore.

"It's a rum thing—love is," he reflected as he pulled the ears of the melancholy fox-hound which sat beside him. "Now, common-sense tells me that there's every reason why I should pack up and leave Red Lion for good and all, and yet I haven't the least idea of doing it unless Josie goes with me. I have about made up my mind I can't get along without her, you see, Rover, and in some way or other I mean to have her. It's a *very* rum thing, love is, and there's no mistaking it when it comes at last."

Rover turned his back and laid down, as though such subjects were beneath contempt, and Richard lit a match and consulted his watch.

"She's very late," he said; "I hope nothing has happened."

The door of the Farnaby house opened, and Anna, muffled in a shawl, stepped out. Feeling her way carefully, she went slowly forward.

"I'll go myself," she said, "just this once. It can't be very wrong. It's quite easy; down the lane to the river, and I can hold on to the fence."

It was a difficult walk for the blind girl. To follow the fence closely was necessary for guidance; therefore she must desert the path and toil along as best she could. Anna went slowly forward, stumbling often, and falling sometimes over unexpectedly high tufts of grass.

"How full the air is of smoke!" she exclaimed.

She could remember how the burning marshes had looked to her when a child, and the odor of the smoke which filled her nostrils recalled a night many years before, when she had stood with her mother and Josie in this same lane, watching the rapidly spreading fields of flame and the red glow which bounded the horizon. She recollected how strange and unreal the familiar landscape had seemed to her, and how she had clung to her mother, half afraid and half delighted, as she watched the dark figure she could not recognize as her father, which seemed to be in the midst of the fire. That night when he came home, leaving the marsh black and dead, he had forced his gun into her unwilling hands, and it had exploded.

Anna leaned against the fence and turned her face towards the marsh.

"I want to see it again," she cried rebelliously; "I want to see everything—the sky, the trees, and the sunshine. I want to see the river, oh, I want to see it! What have I ever done that I should be blind?"

"I wonder what I am like?" she continued, as though addressing someone. "I wish I could look into a mirror, just once, and see what sort of a woman I have grown into. I should like to see Josie. What was it he said, 'Imagine a wild rose, just opening.' I want——"

She bowed her head until it rested against the rough rail of the fence.

"I want to see *him*," she whispered.

The cool night breeze fanned her hot cheek, and a rabbit, hurrying home, scampered by her, its little feet making the dead leaves rustle slightly.

"What's that?" she exclaimed sharply. "Is anybody there?"

But no one answered, so she started on, walking slowly and carefully until she reached the bank of the river. There she paused uncertainly, as though half afraid.

"I ought not to have come," she thought; "it is not right. It's no use to pretend to myself that I came to give him Josie's message. I came because I wanted to hear his voice once more and touch his hand. I am untrue to my sister, who trusts me. I am not sure what I shall do next; I do not seem to know myself to-night. I am afraid! Oh, I am afraid!"

She stumbled over a log and sank down upon it, hiding her face in her hands.

"Why shouldn't I do it?" she sobbed. "Why shouldn't I come if I want to? Must I always put others before myself? Because I am blind, must I crush every natural instinct of my heart? Is that any reason I should be different from other women? Everybody pities me, and I want love, not pity. It is a woman's right to be loved."

The river rippled tranquilly, as though indifferent to human joys or sorrows. It had quieted many an aching heart in its time, and would probably calm many more. The sound of the water soothed the girl insensibly, and as she listened to it she gradually regained her self-control.

"I will be brave," she said, catching her breath quickly; "no one shall ever know. And I will be true to Josie, but I must say good-by."

She rose as she spoke and stood listening intently. Someone was coming down the bank behind her. She drew her shawl over her head and held it tightly around her.

"Dearest," said Richard anxiously as he drew her close to him and kissed her repeatedly, "what made you so late? I was getting worried."

The slender form lay quite still in his arms, but the face was turned aside and she did not reply.

"Why are you so late?" he repeated.

There was no answer, but a sudden breeze lifted the shawl from her head, and a long lock of dark hair fell forward across his arm. At the same time, encouraged by the wind, the marsh blazed up brilliantly, its red glare shining full on the two figures on the river bank. Richard looked quickly down at the face upon his breast.

"Anna!" he exclaimed, "Anna!"

She raised her head and drew herself away from him, replacing the shawl and laughing nervously.

"I'm all right now," she said; "I was a little faint, I think. You thought I was Josie, didn't you? I quite understand."

"What are you doing here," said Richard, "alone and at night?"

"He came soon after supper,—Mr. Poole, I mean,—and Josie could not get away; if she left the house, he would have followed her, you know. That is what they do now."

"Did Josie ask you to do this?" said Richard.

"Oh, no! She only asked me to send you word by Josephus not to wait, but I could not find him, so I came myself. You are going away soon with Josie,—she has told me all about it,—and I wanted to say good-by, and tell you how happy I hope you will be. I should not have been able to do it if I had not come to-night."

The marsh burned cheerfully on one side of them, and on the other

the river lapped lazily against the bank, as though unwilling to exert itself any more than positively necessary.

"Are you angry that Josie did not come?" inquired Anna timidly, after a long pause; "of course you are disappointed, but she could not help it. They watch her so closely, you know, ever since the night Mr. Poole brought her home. She is very unhappy."

"Anna," he said, "since you are here I must confide in you, and you will help us, will you not?"

"You know I will," she replied.

"Since the other night," he resumed,—“and, by the way, Anna, I expect there was a tremendous row at your house that night.”

"Yes," she replied, "there was indeed. Poor Josie!"

"So I supposed. Well, since then, you know, it has been impossible for me to see Josie. I dare not come to the house, and she cannot get away. Now what I want you to tell her is this: On Thursday night at seven o'clock I will be by the wild-cherry tree at the gate leading from the lane into the main road, and I will wait there until she comes. Somehow or other she must manage to get away, for it will be our last chance. Will you tell her?"

"Yes," said Anna. "What else?"

"Tell her that although Thursday is nearly a week off, it is the first night I can get Mr. Barnett's horse,—I have hired it, you know,—and we will drive to Wilmington and send it home from there. I have got that confounded license all right this time and made every arrangement I could think of."

"When you have gone away," said Anna, "when you and Josie are happily married, you will not forget us? You will sometimes remember that we are thinking about you constantly, and wondering how you are and what you are doing?"

"Why, of course we won't forget you," said Richard cheerfully; "you will hear from us often, and after a while this trouble will blow over, as such things always do, and Josie and I will be forgiven and come home like two Prodigals. We shall expect the fatted calf killed for us, I assure you."

"No," said Anna quietly, "you will not be forgiven, and you will never be allowed to come home. Josie realizes that, I think. Any letters you may write will be returned unopened, and we will have no communication with you whatever. You must take good care of her, Mr. Bradley, for she will have no one else."

"I will do my best," he returned briefly.

Anna rose slowly to her feet and adjusted her shawl.

"It is time for me to go home," she said, "and I must trouble you to come with me as far as the yard, for I am afraid to trust myself. It is foolish, I know, but I suppose I must be a little nervous."

"Did you believe I would let you go alone?" asked Richard reproachfully. "You must not think anything I can do for you would ever be a trouble."

"Listen to the water," she said, turning towards the river. "What does it say to you, Mr. Bradley?"

"Why," said he gayly, "for one thing, it says my name is Richard and that you must not be so formal with me, little sister. What does it say to you?"

"It says a great deal to me," she replied, "and sometimes I like to hear it, but to-night it has nothing pleasant to tell me; it says that everything is over, gone like the summer, and nothing can be the same again for me. Let us go home; I want to get away from the river; I feel half afraid of it."

"You are depressed," he said, "and I don't wonder. I suppose it is the thought of losing Josie, and I really feel quite self-reproachful when I think what I am taking away from you; but you see, Anna, I want her so very much that I just must have her. Give me your hand, and let me help you down the bank."

The marsh was nearly burnt out now, and only charred bits of grass remained where blazing fields had illuminated the landscape. They walked slowly home by way of the lane in almost absolute silence.

"It was very good in you to bring Josie's message yourself," said Richard at last. "I was so much surprised to see you here that I forgot to thank you for your trouble."

"I do not deserve to be thanked," she replied, "I wanted to come."

"I meant to see you somehow, if I possibly could, before we went away," he continued; "of course, I wanted to say good-by, and I thought I would like you to wish us luck. I have an idea, you know, that good wishes from you are bound to be fulfilled."

"If my good wishes," she said, "could bring success, your life—yours and Josie's—would be without pain and sorrow. And you will be happy, I am sure of it; how could you help it, loving each other as you do, and being together always? You will live in her, and she in you; that will make your lives complete. You will work for her, protect her, and treasure her. You will stand between her and the world; you will shield her from temptation and suffering; she will be your last thought at night and your first in the morning. Oh, it must be beautiful to be loved like that."

"Some day," said Richard, "you will be loved just that way; but he must be a very good fellow, you know, or I won't give my consent."

"I shall always be pitied, not loved," she said quietly, "and there's such a difference between love and pity."

Richard paused as they reached the yard.

"I hardly like to go any nearer," he said, "having been ordered

off the premises. I will watch you until you are safely in the house. Do you think you can manage it?"

"Yes, of course, and—good-by."

"You will not forget my message?" he said. "Tell her to try and be there as early as possible, although I will wait until she comes, no matter how late it is."

"I will not forget."

"And thank you many times for your good wishes. I am glad to think we have a guardian angel looking out for us, and one whose intercession would surely be heard."

"Good-by, Richard," said Anna softly,—“good-by.”

He stooped and kissed her forehead.

"Good-by, dear little sister," he said.

X.

For days it had rained steadily. The sodden fields and submerged marshes looked melancholy indeed, while such cattle as were unfortunate enough to be without shelter huddled close together, standing back to the wind, with water dripping from every hair, and heads drooped forward as though despairing of better days.

Along the coast the east wind held high carnival. It shrieked around the corners of houses, causing the inmates to look affectionately at their fires and draw closer to them; it flourished among the leafless trees, tossing their branches about like plumes, and twisting their trunks until sometimes the roots, being unable to withstand the strain, came bursting through the saturated earth, as with a mighty crash the tree fell, crushing beneath it whatever chanced to be in its path. At such times the wind would lull, as though holding its breath in consternation at what it had done, only to start again in a moment with redoubled force. It agitated the already swollen river, churning its waters until the white spray rose high in the air and the waves raged furiously.

"Let us in," they cried, as they beat against the bank with ever-increasing force, "give way, and let us in."

"I will not," said the bank; "I was built to keep you out, and I am strong. You shall not come in."

"Come down," called the wind, as its strength increased. "I know your weakest point, and I will drive the water there. Together we will conquer you. Come down."

For two days the raging of wind and waves had been ineffectual; the bank was invincible and triumphant. The evening of the third day drew near; the waves continued to beat ceaselessly, the violence of the wind was undiminished, and the bank still stood firm; but the strain was great, and it was getting tired.

Mrs. Farnaby moved listlessly about, preparing the evening meal, and occasionally glancing towards Josie, who sat, pale and silent, shivering at the fury of the storm. Anna crept close to her sister, holding her nerveless hand and stroking it gently with the silent sympathy which is so comforting.

"It is Thursday night," whispered Josie at last. "He was to wait by the wild cherry-tree at the gate. I must go."

"He will not be there," returned Anna in the same tone; "the storm is too great; he will not expect you."

"He will be there; you do not know him. I *must* get away."

The shutter banged fiercely against the window, shattering a pane of glass to atoms, and Mr. Farnaby rose and stuffed an old coat in the aperture. While he was thus occupied Josie stole silently towards the door leading into the hall.

"Come back," he said, suddenly perceiving her,—*"come back, I say."*

The girl slowly returned to her chair and resumed her air of apathy, which the glitter in her eyes somewhat contradicted.

"You were going to meet your lover," he said slowly; "you thought to slip away without my knowledge, but you can't do it. You think he means to marry you. You are a fool."

"I am your child."

"And your mother's also. You presume to put your will against mine; there again you are a fool. I have said you shall marry Silas Poole, and I never break my word."

"And I," replied Josie, "have said I would not marry him. I too can keep my word."

"If you leave the house to-night," he continued, "I will go with you. Later, I intend to go alone and meet him; he shall not wait in vain. To-night I mean to settle this question for ever, and you will never see him again. Understand that fully—never again."

Mrs. Farnaby paused by her daughter, putting her arm around her and drawing the golden head against her breast.

"There, dear, there," she said soothingly, checking the angry retort that sprang to Josie's lips, "come with mother; come lie down, and after a while I'll bring you a cup of tea."

"Anna," said her husband, as his face darkened still more, "tell your mother I am watching closely; she can't hoodwink me to-night. Josie must stay where she is."

"Tell your father, Anna," responded Mrs. Farnaby quietly, "that he is at liberty to watch all night. Josie shall come with me."

Leaving the door wide open, as though to enable her husband to watch better, Mrs. Farnaby led her daughter upstairs and persuaded her to lie down upon the bed. As she covered her warmly and bent

over to kiss her a blast of wind swept around the old house until it trembled upon its foundations.

"Oh mother," sobbed Josie, "mother——"

"I know, dear, I know. Cry, Josie, don't try to stop, my darling. It will do you good."

With trembling hands she stroked the flushed face, straightened the pillows, once more adjusted the cover, and returned to the kitchen with her usual air of indifference.

Joseph Farnaby sat motionless, gazing after his wife and daughter as they disappeared up the narrow stairway. Josie's unlooked-for obstinacy had roused in him a determination to conquer her. He had expected tears, reproaches, perhaps, but not open rebellion. The aversion he had first felt towards the marriage and the reluctance with which he had agreed to it had vanished entirely. He was now conscious only of a stolid determination to break the spirit of the girl and to force her to acknowledge the supremacy of his will. And this Josie refused to do.

She had said she would not marry Silas Poole, even though the house were pulled down over their heads, and it was evident she meant to keep her word. Her father recognized his own indomitable will, looking straight at him from eyes so like his wife's, yet without their gentleness, and realized that the victory would not be an easy one. He intended to carry his point, no matter at what cost; he expected to see the flash of defiance fade from the blue eyes and be replaced by tears of submission. And he knew that a crisis was inevitably close at hand.

As he sat grimly upright, with his unlighted pipe in his mouth, he felt a light touch upon his arm and turning looked into the dark eyes of his other daughter, the child dear to his heart, yet blind because of him.

"Anna," he said, putting his arm gently around her, "this is a dull home for you, my dear. After a while I hope it will be better. I am doing my best for you, Anna; always try and remember that, won't you?"

"I love you, father," she whispered, laying her soft cheek against his.

He drew her closer to him and stroked her hair silently.

"But I love Josie too," she continued, "and she's very miserable. For my sake, father, don't——"

"Hush, Anna, you do not understand."

The rain beat against the windows, and the roar of the waves grew more distinct as the storm increased in violence.

"Listen," said Anna, "how the wind howls. You will not go out to-night, father? Promise me."

"I must go out.

"Anna," he said, after a moment's silence, "suppose you had been in Josie's place, what would you have done? Would you have allowed your own selfish desires to bring poverty and wretchedness to those near and dear to you? I don't think so. I am sure you would trust me to know what was best for you, and believe me, not a stranger whom six months ago you did not know."

Joseph Farnaby looked into the sightless eyes of his best-loved child and saw reflected there the light which shone in Josie's eyes when she had refused obedience. He saw his own nature reproduced where he least expected it, and the revelation was distasteful to him.

"If I were Josie," she said slowly, "I would marry the man I loved and who loved me. I should be sorry if you thought me wrong, it would grieve me deeply, father, but I should marry him.

"You are not angry at what I have said, are you?" she continued after the pause which followed her last speech. "We'll always be together, father, you and I, and we'll always love each other—always. Kiss me and tell me you are not angry."

She put her hand on his arm as she spoke, but he shook it impatiently off, saying with an oath that she was just like all the rest, and the sooner she got out of his sight the better for both of them.

Surprised and grieved at the unexpected repulse, Anna made her way up the narrow stairway.

"He didn't mean what he said," she thought as she entered Josie's room. "Poor father; he is tired and worried to-night; he will be sorry to-morrow. He didn't mean it, I know."

Feeling her way carefully to the bed, she knelt beside it, stroking her sister's hot head tenderly. It was Josie that first broke the silence.

"He must not meet father," she said, "and he will wait for me. I can't get away; I can't even send him word. Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do?"

"You are sure he will be there?"

"You don't know what love is or you would not ask that."

"No," said Anna quietly, "perhaps not, Josie."

"He's waiting now," sobbed Josie, "in all the rain, and he will wait, and wait, until at last—oh Anna! and I can't even send him word."

"Hush," said Anna gently, "don't cry so, Josie. I'll go; no one watches me, and I can easily slip out. Give me your message, and it will be all right."

Josie sat upright in her surprise.

"Oh Anna," she said breathlessly, "you couldn't! You would be wet through and blown away. Hear the wind."

"You would go if you could. The rain and wind are just the same for both of us."

"I would go, of course," said Josie, "but that is different. I would not come back. How could you find your way?"

"It is very easy, dear. Follow the fence to the first gap, then turn to the left; that takes you down the lane; the turn to the right leads to the river. Don't I know every inch of ground near the house, and haven't I been down to the gate alone many and many a time?"

Josie went to the window and looked out.

"The wind has fallen, I think," she said, "but it is raining in torrents and is very dark. I never saw so black a night. You couldn't go, Anna; it is impossible."

"It will not be any darker than usual for me, you know," replied Anna quietly, "and the distance is so short I'll be back before any one misses me."

"Richard could see you safely home," said Josie doubtfully.

"Why, of course he would. What do you suppose could happen to me beyond getting a little wet? I believe, Josie, that God keeps a special watch over those He has afflicted, and takes care of us always. Don't be afraid for me, dear. I will be home before you realize I have gone, and you will have dry clothes ready for me, won't you?"

When we are overtaken by our first real trouble we become, as a rule, absorbed in our grief and selfish because of it, receiving sympathy carelessly as our right, not accepting it gratefully as an inestimable gift. When sorrow comes again and yet again, as it will surely come to all, we appreciate the tears shed with and for us, realize the sacrifices often made for our sakes, and treasure in our hearts the memory of the love which prompted such sympathy.

It seemed to Josie only natural that her sister should be willing to help her in any way possible, and therefore she hesitated no longer. Anna was quite accustomed to making her way about the yard and lane alone, and nothing worse than getting wet could happen to her.

"Come," said Anna cheerfully, "give me your message and let me go."

"Tell him," said Josie, "why I did not come, and beg him to go away at once. Tell him that to-morrow I promise to be at the Bear Station in time for the noon train. You must help me get away by taking father somewhere for a little while; you will, won't you?"

"Yes, Josie, if I can."

"And oh, Anna, if you are going, don't wait any longer. Think how wet he must be and how cold. An hour ago I was to have been there, and he has waited all this time."

"I'm going now. Kiss me, Josie, and help me find a shawl."

Josie put her arms about her sister and kissed her lovingly.

"I ought not to let you go, Anna," she said, "I know I ought not; but what can I do? Richard will bring you back to the house, and we will never forget what you have done for us. After we are married you shall come and live with us; we have often planned how happy we would make you, and how we would have your eyes examined by the best oculists. Perhaps your sight can be restored, you know; Richard says it's quite possible, and——"

"He is very kind," interrupted Anna hastily, "and so are you, dear, to remember me and plan such lovely things for me, but I don't think I can live with you, Josie. Now you really must let me go, or father will get there first."

"Yes," said Josie nervously, guiding her sister to the door, "there are the stairs, Anna, and do be as quick as you can. Think of his waiting so long in all the storm. Oh, if I could only go myself! Mind the step; you are sure you are not afraid? I'll have dry things ready for you when you get home, and——"

Passing quietly through the kitchen, unchallenged by either parent, Anna went into the parlor and out of the seldom used front door. Josie, listening intently, heard it close, and at the same time a fresh gust of wind sent the rain against the window with renewed vigor. With trembling hands she raised the sash and leaned out.

"Anna," she called, "come back. You must not go. Come back."

But her voice was lost in the noise of the wind and roar of the river, for the Delaware was very angry to-night.

Closing the door carefully behind her, Anna advanced a few steps down the familiar path, but the wind came hurrying around the corner and, forcing her back against the house, pinned her securely there, dropping her disdainfully at last, as though scorning to contend with so slight a thing. Taking advantage of a momentary lull, she went forward again with outstretched hands, hoping soon to touch the fence which was to be her guide and support.

The wind was behind her now, in front of her, and on every side. It got under her shawl and loosened her hair; it wound her wet skirts about her until she felt as though she were in a vice; it drove the rain against her face, down her neck, and into her shoes; it came from all points of the compass at once, taking her breath and forcing her to stand motionless; and then it gathered all its strength behind her, driving her swiftly before it, pushing her on relentlessly, until she stumbled and fell, after which it rested a while.

Pulling herself together as well as she could, Anna slowly rose to her feet. She felt confused and bewildered and not confident that she was going in the right direction; surely she should have reached the fence by this time. But there was no fence to reach. Since early

evening it had lain disconsolately in the mud, with the wild cherry-tree by the gate beside it, broken and humiliated.

As she hesitated the wind returned, refreshed and invigorated by its brief rest. It snatched her shawl from her and sent it sailing through the air like a large kite; it twisted her this way and that, turning her wherever it wished, and finally drove her before it towards the marsh, which was now completely submerged, with here and there a melancholy tuft of grass showing above the water. Helpless and frightened, Anna fled before the wind. Her long hair, heavy with rain, blew about her face and shoulders, the ends cutting her like little whips. At every step she sank above her shoe in water, but still she was forced on, until at last something stopped her. It was a fence, slightly unsteady, perhaps, and leading over the marsh to the river, not down the lane, as she supposed, but still a fence and a support.

"It's only a little way now," she panted, holding on to it with all her strength, "only a little way, and he will help me get home."

Slowly and painfully she toiled on towards the river, raging in its might and rising steadily; with every step she sank deeper into the mud and water, until, quite exhausted, she paused for breath. For the first time in her life she was alone in the marsh and in danger.

The river bank had done its best, but the battle had been long and the end was near; it was weary and weak, while wind and waves were strong and triumphant. Again and again they hurled themselves upon the bank, until at last it succumbed, as with a mighty roar the water swept over it into the forbidden territory beyond.

Wave followed wave in quick succession. Bridges spanning adjacent creeks were torn asunder; causeways were flooded, and hapless vessels driven miles inland, to be discovered stranded high and dry when the river subsided. At the first rush of water the fence to which Anna clung trembled and fell. God must indeed keep very special guard over His afflicted to help her to-night.

In the little room at home Josie knelt on the floor with her face pressed against the window, gazing anxiously into the darkness and vainly trying to distinguish the figure for which she waited so impatiently.

Downstairs Joseph Farnaby sat grimly watching the door; one daughter had passed through it lately, and he had seen her enter the parlor without comment; she was at liberty to go where she pleased; it was the other for whom he waited.

Mrs. Farnaby went listlessly about her work; meals must be cooked and dishes washed, though heads and hearts ache in unison and hands and feet are weary. She had seen Anna go upstairs, but had not

noticed her return and supposed her still with her sister. Placing the coffee on the table, she went to the foot of the stairs.

"Anna," she called, "tell your father supper's ready."

XI.

RICHARD BRADLEY stood with his hand on the latch of the door of the Barnett house.

"I don't suppose," he said, "that it's worth while to take an umbrella."

"It's a night," returned Mr. Barnett, "such as I never seen before. It's blowin' from the east and the west and the north *and* the south all to onct, and rainin' cats and dogs. 'Tain't safe fur man or beast to be abroad, Mr. Bradley, and though it's none of my business what you do and where you go, I'd advise you to stay at home. 'Tain't safe, I tell you, 'tain't safe."

"Nevertheless, I must go."

"Well," said Mr. Barnett, crossing his legs comfortably, "have your own way. But if you go, you'll have to walk, fur the old bay mare don't leave her stall this night,—not if the President hisself wanted to make a train. So that's all I've got to say about it."

"You agreed to hire her to me," said Richard, "and if anything should happen I am willing to pay all damages."

"There ain't a buggy," returned Mr. Barnett, "as wouldn't capsize before you'd went half a mile. I've had that mare now goin' on twenty year, and I've took good care of her. She ain't goin' to plunge along them roads to-night, with trees crashin' down every little while, and shingles from barns flyin' through the air like snowflakes—not if I know it."

Seeing that argument was useless, Richard wasted no more words but went out, closing the door with a good deal of force. He was angry and discouraged, for the walk before him was long and he felt by no means sure that Josie would venture out, even if it were possible for her to leave the house unnoticed. Still, it was an appointment he must in honor keep, so he pulled his cap well down over his eyes and started forth.

With great difficulty he made his way down the road, often running into the hedge and stumbling over branches in the darkness. Leaning against the trunk of a tree for support, he paused for breath. It groaned and swayed ominously, and Richard sprang hastily back; he was none too soon, for the tree now lay across the road, with its branches fluttering dismally in the wind. Something struck him smartly on the back; it was a bit of board, probably from some neighboring barn. Should he go on?

Even if he could manage to walk the three miles stretching out

before him, was it at all probable that she would be there? He thought not. Common-sense would tell her they could not reach Wilmington that night. Josie was reasonable; she was sensible. Of course she would understand it was impossible for him to come; of course she would not expect him. No doubt she had come to that conclusion early in the day. But if she did go, what then? Suppose——

Something struck the ground in front of him and beside him. Richard bent down to examine and discovered two more bits of plank half buried in the mud from the force with which they had fallen. It would appear that the barn was being demolished very fast, and there were, doubtless, many other boards to come.

He turned and slowly retraced his steps.

"You were right, Mr. Barnett," he said as he removed his dripping coat, "it is not a fit night for man or beast to be abroad. No one could possibly venture out."

"Anna," called Mrs. Farnaby again, "tell your father supper's ready."

Receiving no reply, she went upstairs in response to a hysterical sob from Josie, while her husband sat waiting until his blind child should call him to supper.

Already he reproached himself bitterly for having repulsed her, and regretted the harsh words with which he had thrust her aside. For the first time since they had told him she would never see again he had failed to respond to her slightest advance; for the first time he had forgotten the affliction he had brought upon her, and he wanted to show her that he was sorry. He intended to put his arm about her and tell her he did not mean what he had said. So he waited for the light touch and sweet voice, which for so many years had never failed to summon him to his meals.

He waited a long time. The supper on the table grew cold and uninviting, and still he waited. At last hurried footsteps came down the stairs, and Mrs. Farnaby, followed by Josie, entered the kitchen.

"Joe," she said excitedly, breaking the silence of years by addressing him directly, "Anna is not in the house; she has gone out."

He sprang angrily to his feet.

"Ask your mother," he said to his daughter, "where she has gone."

But Josie could only sob pitifully, hiding her face in her hands as her father continued to address her.

"So this was your plan," he continued slowly; "you could not get away yourself, so you sent her. She never went out this wild night on any errand of her own; you sent her out in this storm to carry your message. You did not want him to meet me, so you sent her to prevent it. This was the scheme your mother helped you to concoct when

you went upstairs together to-night. You sent her out, not caring what became of her."

He started to the door, but Mrs. Farnaby stood before it.

"Joe," she cried, "don't look at me like that. I didn't know she was going. Indeed I did not. Speak to me before you go. I knew nothing about it, I tell you, nothing."

"Tell your mother," he said, "to move away from the door and let me out. Tell her that I don't believe her; tell her I ceased to believe her sixteen years ago.

"As for you," he continued, "still addressing Josie, 'remember that you are responsible for whatever happens to-night. If Anna does not come home with me, safe and well, you are free to go where you please and marry whom you like: I never wish to see your face again.'"

"Don't say that, Joe," sobbed his wife, "you don't mean it. Speak to me before you go out, even if you speak harshly. It was a bad oath, —a bad oath,—and should be broken. I did not know she was going out, I tell you. Do you think I would have let her go? She is my child as well as yours; don't you suppose I love her too? Only tell me——"

But he pushed her impatiently aside and went out into the night without a backward glance.

How the wind howled and the rain beat against him. Somewhere in the darkness she was wandering, cold and lost.

"If you had not repulsed her," whispered Conscience, "if you had kept her beside you, as you should have done, she would not be cold and lost."

He silenced Conscience promptly. It was her mother's fault, not his.

"Anna," he shouted, "I'm coming."

The row of cedar-trees behind the barn had fallen like ninepins and lay in a melancholy row upon the ground. He stumbled over them and turned away towards the river.

"The marsh," he thought; "my God! if she should be in the marsh!"

Many familiar landmarks had succumbed and but few trees remained uninjured. One of these, however, was the big walnut in the lane. This veteran of many storms still waved its branches triumphantly as its huge trunk bent this way and that, as though proudly conscious of its strength."

Louder even than the voice of the wind was the sound of the waves as they dashed themselves against the river bank. Again and again they thundered ominously as they advanced for a new assault.

"I'm coming, Anna, I'm coming."

Plunging desperately down the lane, he ran against the trunk of

the walnut-tree in the darkness. Tired out by the buffeting of the wind, he paused for a moment's rest. Which way should he go?"

Something besides the noise of wind and waves became audible, and he listened intently. It was the sound of rushing water. Again he listened.

"The bank," he cried, "the bank is down!"

The wind gathered all its strength for a final effort, and then the walnut-tree was down also, with something pinned to the earth beneath it.

XII.

"In the midst of life we are in death," quoted Mrs. Smithers sentimentally.

"Ah, that's true indeed," returned Mrs. Wilkins, putting the teapot in front of the fire.

"The hand of the Lord," continued Mrs. Smithers, "has been laid heavy on this house. What a storm it was, to be sure."

The two ladies were in possession of the Farnaby kitchen. According to the kindly custom of the country, they had immediately offered their services to the stricken family when the news of the disaster reached Red Lion, and were combining much practical assistance with a modicum of melancholy pleasure at being in the midst of such an unheard-of calamity.

"Long as I've lived on the Delaware River," said Mrs. Wilkins, "I've never knowed it to act so before. They do say it's what's called a tidal wave. I ain't a-sayin' it, but that's what they tell me."

"There ain't a barn within miles," responded Mrs. Smithers, "as has got a roof left on it. Did you lose anything, Mis. Wilkins?"

"Only the black sow, praise be given! Josh, he takes on fearful about it (and she was a good breeder, to be sure), but I tell him to think what happened here and be thankful."

The tea being drawn by this time, they sat down, each in a rocking-chair, to refresh themselves by a social cup.

"How's *he*?" inquired Mrs. Smithers, indicating by a jerk of her thumb the room above.

"Sinkin' fast," whispered Mrs. Wilkins; "they do say he won't last the day out."

The rocking-chairs creaked mournfully as they swayed to and fro.

"And Mis. Farnaby," resumed Mrs. Wilkins, still whispering, "is clean distracted, callin' on him not to die without speakin' to her, and him a-layin' there like a log with nothin' to show whether he hears her or not. It's enough to melt a heart of stone to hear her."

"It's my belief," remarked Mrs. Smithers, "that he'd continnoo to lay that-a-way, even if he did hear her."

Mrs. Wilkins nodded emphatically, then put down her cup and leaned close to her companion.

"She's sent fur Si Poole," she whispered.

Mrs. Smithers stared at her incredulously, and finally ejaculated, "Well, I never!"

There was silence for a time, then Mrs. Wilkins resumed, with a glance towards the darkened parlor,—

"Anna—does anybody know how it happened?"

"When the water went down," said Mrs. Smithers, wiping away a tear, "she was found in the marsh, drowned. Nobody knows how she got there. And her father was found under the big walnut-tree; pinned to the earth he was, and what a time they had to get the tree off him."

"Many's the basket of nuts I've picked up under that tree," said Mrs. Wilkins in momentary retrospect, "and what good ones they always was. Dear, dear! And he's never spoke a word, has he?"

"Onct," said Mrs. Smithers, "he opened his eyes and looked around wild-like, and sez, sez he, 'Anna, I'm comin',' sez he, but that's all; and it's my belief, Mis. Wilkins, that he'll pass away without a word more."

"The minister," said Mrs. Wilkins, "he's here, ain't he?"

"Brother Strong and his wife was here when I fust come. He's upstairs now. There's nothin' he can do, of course, but he offers up a prayer frequent jest to show his good will."

Mrs. Strong passed through the kitchen and entered the silent parlor; her hands were filled with white flowers, which she placed in those other hands, so peacefully folded. Anna lay as though she were asleep; her eyes, sightless no longer, were closed, the dark lashes showing distinctly against the pale cheeks, and her lips were slightly parted, as if a smile had but just left them. The minister's wife stooped and kissed the cold brow tenderly, stroking the dark hair with reverent hand.

"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," she murmured, placing an opening rose on Anna's breast.

The sound of rapidly approaching wheels became evident, and Mrs. Strong went to the door to admit Silas Poole.

"You will not be surprised," she said in rather a hesitating manner, "if Mrs. Farnaby is slightly hysterical. She may not mean all that she says, you know, and—you will be kind to her, Mr. Poole, and remember that she has had a great shock. She is not quite——"

"Do not be afraid," returned the old man, "I have been hard enough in my time, but to-day I have come to make what reparation I can. Does he still live?"

"We fear the end is very near."

"Then take me upstairs at once, there is something I must say to him while he can understand it. Please do not delay."

Mrs. Strong led the way up the narrow staircase and into the room above, where Mrs. Farnaby and Josie knelt beside the bed where husband and father lay motionless. The doctor and clergyman had withdrawn to the window, leaving to wife and child the first glance, if the eyes should open; the first word that might fall from the pallid lips.

In that quiet room there was also another—a Presence, unwelcome yet obtrusive, invisible yet apparent. It stood before the doctor demanding recognition, and he bowed before it and turned aside; the clergyman knew it also, and greeted it on his knees. Both had met it many times before; both would probably meet it many times again in years to come. It passed by Josie, and she shivered, hiding her face she knew not why. It came close to Mrs. Farnaby, and she refused to recognize it, waving it defiantly aside; it came closer, and she acknowledged it with bowed head and aching heart. Her cup of bitterness was full at last, pressed down, and running over.

It came near, very near, to Joseph Farnaby and lingered there, but he was not yet ready to receive it, so the Presence withdrew somewhat, waiting for the appointed time.

Mrs. Strong opened the door and motioned to Mr. Poole to enter. He stood for a moment unnoticed; then Mrs. Farnaby lifted her head and looked at him.

"So you have come," she said, rising and walking towards him.

"You sent for me."

"Yes," she replied, "I sent for you. I wanted you to see your work; it is nearly finished now. Are you satisfied?"

He made no reply, and she continued, pressing her small, nervous hands tightly together.

"Look at my husband, and remember that you have killed him. Look at me, and triumph in my misery. Go downstairs and look at my dead child, and realize that but for you she would be living. Is it enough? Are you satisfied, or is there more to come? More——"

"Stop," he said, putting out a deprecating hand; "stop. I—I cannot bear it."

"Stop?" she repeated. "Why should I stop? Did you ever once pause to consider what you were doing? Did you care that your revenge, planned so carefully, would bring poverty and wretchedness to the innocent, who had done you no harm, as well as to me. Do you think——"

A slight movement from the bed caused her to pause and look towards it. Her husband had opened his eyes and made an effort to speak.

"Joe," she cried, throwing herself on her knees beside him, "Joe, look at me. Speak to me, speak to me! It was a bad oath, a bad oath. Speak to me!"

His eyes turned towards Josie, and he moved his lips slightly.

"Anna," he said faintly, "I'm coming."

Yes, that was true; he was going very fast.

Again he looked at his daughter with a puzzled expression, and putting out his hand touched her hair.

"It is only Josie, father," she said brokenly, "that's all."

"Anna," he repeated, "where is Anna?"

"Quite safe, father; you will see her soon."

The Presence advanced a little and he closed his eyes wearily.

"Joe," sobbed his wife, "you won't leave me without a word; you can't do that, surely. Open your eyes and look at me."

Very slowly the lids were raised and the Presence once more retreated. Beckoning to Silas Poole to approach, Mrs. Farnaby took her husband's passive hand in both of hers, pressing it close to her breast.

"Joe," she said, "I have something to say to you, and you must hear me. I am not what you thought me—can you understand?"

"Those letters, Joe, those wretched letters, were to Mary Poole. Many and many a time I've tried to tell you this, but you wouldn't listen. Often and often I've written it, but you tore up my letters before me unread. I love you, Joe, I love you, and I'm telling you the truth."

The inquiring eyes looked directly into hers.

"Ask this man," she continued, pointing to Mr. Poole, who stood with bowed head at the foot of the bed. "Let him tell you how for years he has planned to bring ruin and unhappiness to you, misery and degradation to me. Now, in the day of his triumph, let him tell you that I have never for a moment been unfaithful to you by word or thought. Ask him if I speak the truth. He knows."

"It is true," said Silas Poole solemnly, "before God."

"Tell him," she commanded, turning to Mr. Poole, "that you lied to him, not once, but often."

"I lied to you," repeated the old man; "yes, it is true, all true."

In the stillness which enveloped the room the ticking of the doctor's watch was distinctly audible as it raced on, hurrying to keep pace with time.

"Joseph Farnaby," said Mr. Poole slowly, "can you hear me and understand what I say?"

A slight motion of his head replied in the affirmative.

"You and your wife once did me a great injury. You were my friend, but you stole her from me and married her, knowing she was

pledged to me. Then I determined to be revenged upon you both, and for years I waited for my opportunity."

The watch ticked faster than ever in its endeavor to keep up with time, while the monotonous voice went on:

"You were jealous of your wife and it made you suspicious. You were very ready to listen to me and believe what I insinuated. You were a fool. After you quarrelled your hard nature prevented you from learning the truth, for I had lied to you. Do you still follow me? I see that you do.

"Well, you know the rest. How little by little I have ruined you, and how at last I proposed to exchange the property for your daughter."

Mrs. Farnaby caught her breath as though she would interrupt him, but he waved her aside and went on.

"I have lived a lonely life enough, and I thought a young thing about the house would be pleasant. Last night, however, I could not sleep; it was the storm, I suppose. I was haunted by your wife's face as it used to be and as it now is; I thought of this child, who would also lose her youth and fade as her mother had done. The success of the revenge I had worked for so many years suddenly seemed very small and unworthy of a man. I almost determined to come here this morning and destroy the notes I held on condition that Josie should marry the man she loved. I had decided to do this, not for your sake or your wife's, but for the girl who had loved me once, and died to me long ago. Do you still understand?"

Again a slight motion of the head answered him.

"This morning I heard what had happened here, and I knew I was responsible. It is more than I ever intended; I have caused the death of that blind child, who never harmed me, and I am bitterly repenting what I have done.

"Here are your notes. I wish to destroy them in the presence of witnesses. You will leave your farm, unencumbered, to your wife, who has never by word or deed been unfaithful to you,—do you hear me?—never for a moment."

The Presence hovered very near now, but Mrs. Farnaby thrust it away, compelling the tired eyes to open again by the very intensity of her desire.

"Joe," she cried, "you heard him, didn't you? Look at me. Speak to me. Think of the years I have waited. Remember the girl you loved long ago; she's here now, on her knees beside you, asking you to tell her you believe in her and love her still. Call me by my name once—just once. Speak to me, Joe, speak to me."

The pale lips moved slightly as he looked towards his daughter.

"Josie," he said faintly, "tell—your—mother——"

But the Presence interposed, and bending over Joseph Farnaby set the seal of silence upon his lips.

XIII.

"MR. STRONG," said Richard, "I must speak to Josie."

The curtains were raised to admit the sunlight into the little parlor. They had found them raised when they returned from the churchyard at Red Lion that afternoon, and a strong odor of coffee permeating the house. Mrs. Wilkins had attended to all such details with a faithfulness which left little unthought of. After the services at the house were over and the dreary procession of carriages slowly filed out of sight, she had fled to dust-brush and cook-stove as the best method of assuaging her emotion.

"I'll make it good and strong," she said as she ground the coffee vigorously, while large tears chased each other down her cheeks. "It will hearten 'em up a bit when they come back, poor things, whether they want it or not. Dear, dear, what a world it is! And she looked as pretty as wax-work a-layin' there so peaceful and happy. The ways of the Lord is hard to understand when it comes to visitin' the sins of the fathers or the mothers on such as her, unless it might be He wanted her Hissself. Fur which," added Mrs. Wilkins magnanimously, "I don't blame Him."

For the last hour Richard had waited in the deserted parlor, roaming restlessly about it, or sitting moodily with folded arms gazing out of the window. He wanted to see Josie alone, and it seemed impossible to do so. Messages had been unavailing, and he therefore welcomed Mrs. Strong eagerly when she entered the room.

"I must see Josie," he repeated.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Strong, "there is no reason you should not. I will tell her you are waiting."

"She will not come," said Richard; "I have sent several messages. She has never seen me since it all happened, but she wrote to me to go away at once. She said she hoped never to see me again."

"Poor little girl," said Mrs. Strong.

"You have been very kind to us," he continued, "and I thought perhaps you would tell me what it all means."

"It means," she replied, "that Josie is overwrought and excited. She blames herself, you know, for Anna's death, and thinks, perhaps, to atone somewhat by giving up what she loves best in the world. Surely you do not doubt her, Mr. Bradley?"

"But," said Richard, "suppose she persists in this strange delusion; what am I to do? I cannot force myself upon her if I am unpleasant to her."

"I will speak to her," said Mrs. Strong; "I think she will see you,

but, Mr. Bradley, you must be patient, and—pardon me if I seem officious. You love her sincerely, do you not? You have no wish yourself to break your engagement?"

"I did not know how much I loved her until to-day," said Richard quietly. "I shall always love her, Mrs. Strong, and it will be my greatest happiness to fulfil my engagement. It would be the object of my life to make her forget this awful tragedy, and to try and show her my appreciation of what she has suffered for my sake. But she will not see me, and I cannot blame her, for I am in a measure responsible for what has happened."

The young man spoke simply and earnestly, and Mrs. Strong laid her hand sympathetically upon his arm.

"No," she said, "you are not responsible. Josie, poor child, considers herself to blame, while Mr. Poole believes the fault was his. He acknowledges being at the root of all trouble to this most unhappy family, and seems to bitterly repent what he has done. Do not let us speak of him, for I cannot yet find it in my heart to forgive him."

"Suppose," he said, "I must leave here alone, what will become of Josie? What is there for her to live upon?"

"They have the farm," said Mrs. Strong. "You know Mr. Poole destroyed the notes, and it is therefore unincumbered. The oldest son will come home and manage the place; they will have enough to live comfortably."

"Mrs. Strong," said Richard, "when I think of Anna—blind, and wandering in the marsh that dreadful night——"

"Hush," she said, "do not dwell so upon it. I am going now to find Josie for you."

Mrs. Strong was absent for some time; evidently Josie was obdurate. Richard walked impatiently about the room; the air, still heavy with the odor of flowers, oppressed him, so he opened the window and stood beside it.

"Out-of-doors the sun shone brightly and the usual sounds of the farm were apparent. A procession of ducks waddled slowly across the yard and he counted them mechanically.

"Seventeen!" he exclaimed.

For the remainder of his life he nourished a feeling of resentment against these innocent fowls, which was totally unjust. Mrs. Smithers was departing, and Mrs. Wilkins accompanied her down the path.

"I kinder hate to leave 'em," said the good woman, "but I've got to go home and see after things there. I reckon them children has got the house topsy-turvy by this time."

She stepped into her carriage and took up the reins.

"To save my life I can't but remember Mr. Poole's face when they laid Anna in her grave," she remarked.

"Well," said Mrs. Wilkins, "he ought to feel bad about it, dear knows."

"I reckon," said Mrs. Smithers reflectively, "if he could have looked for'ard a bit and seen how things was a-goin' to turn out, he'd have done very different."

"Laws," said Mrs. Wilkins impatiently, "when it comes to that, if our foresight was equal to our hindsight, half the trouble in the world would never happen nohow."

The parlor door opened quietly and Josie entered, pale and languid. She put out her hand as Richard eagerly advanced towards her and motioned him away.

"I have come," she said; "it would have been much better if you had gone away, as I asked you, without seeing me, but I have come. What is it that you wish?"

"Josie," he said reproachfully, "surely you don't need ask me that. My darling, I want to be with you and share your trouble; I want to try and comfort you, and talk to you of Anna."

"Hush," she said, "don't you know I killed her?"

"No, dear, no. Don't say such things. You are not responsible for what happened, Josie. We will go away from here, and you shall never come back to this place where you have suffered so much."

"No," she said, "you will go away, but I must stay here. We have been wrong; I see it all so plainly now. I have asked you to go at once; it would have been kinder if you had done so."

"I could not believe you meant it, Josie."

"Oh, yes," she said, "I meant it. I thought I made my meaning very clear. I want you to go away at once—to-day. I want you to forget me, as I shall try to forget you."

"I will not go," he said; "you do not know what you are saying. Why, I love you, Josie, and you love me. You cannot deny it. I should not forget you any more than you would forget me. Think what it means, dearest, to us both."

Josie sat silently looking out of the window into the yard, where the offending ducks still disported themselves in the sunshine.

"Richard," she said finally, "that night—— Did you wait a long time?"

"Josie," he said, his face contracting painfully, "I—I was not there."

She stared at him incredulously.

"You were not there," she repeated, "you were not there?"

"I started and turned back. Oh my love, don't look at me like that. I could not walk the three miles, although I tried to do it. I thought you would not be able to come out, the storm was so great. I thought you would not expect me——"

"She went out," said Josie slowly, "and I let her go into the storm because I thought you would wait there until I came. She went out to save you. She is dead now, you know—and you were not there."

He wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"Don't you suppose," he said, "that I have reproached myself ever since? Do you think I will ever cease to remember that if I had been there I might have saved her? I am tormented by that thought, Josie; night and day it pursues me. Don't make it any harder for me than it is, dear. Don't I blame myself more than you can ever blame me?"

He knelt beside her as he spoke, putting his arm around her, but she sprang to her feet and pushed him away.

"Don't touch me!" she cried, "don't come near me! I never want to see you again!"

XIV.

It is the privilege of the novelist to make flying leaps over long periods of time, and to ignore entirely intervals of months or even years. With men and women, however, these intervals must be lived, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. For them there is no merciful blank possible. They must live their lives patiently, accepting whatever joy or sorrow may be in store for them, and pursuing the monotonous round of existence, eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, until at last it is all over and they reluctantly lay aside forever earthly pain and pleasure, preferring, as a rule, the well-known trials of this world to the unknown bliss of the next.

It was the first of May following the tidal wave which now occupies an important place in the annals of Delaware, and everywhere new life was springing into being. The hedges were putting forth red sprouts, preparatory to bursting into full leaf, and the fruit-trees blossomed with their promises for the coming summer; even the marshes were covered with a new growth of young green grass wherever possible.

Josie Farnaby stood in the doorway and looked about her. It was a greatly changed landscape that met her eyes, with neatly trimmed grass, well-laid walks, and flower-beds in course of preparation. Her brother was an enthusiastic young farmer, and under his jurisdiction the place had assumed quite a different aspect. His wife too was of an active, bustling disposition, and had infused into the house an air of cheerfulness to which it had long been a stranger.

She had done more than this, for she had put a little grandchild into Mrs. Farnaby's arms, hoping that the baby might appeal to her and comfort her where older and wiser heads and hearts were powerless. And it had done so. As she held the little creature in her arms

Mrs. Farnaby lived again her early married life and was insensibly cheered and comforted.

Not so Josie. As the days rolled on into weeks, and the weeks into months, the acute pain and self-reproach which had at first oppressed her were indeed softened somewhat, but in their place came a restlessness, and a longing for an indefinable something—unacknowledged, perhaps, but absorbing.

As a matter of fact, Josie was lonely; it seemed to her that she was necessary to no one. At first her mother had claimed all of her time and attention, but since the arrival of the baby she was, in a measure, set aside and unnoticed. Therefore she wasted much time in retrospection, going over and over in her mind past events, and vaguely wondering what the result would have been had she acted differently. As the spring advanced she developed a fondness for long, solitary rambles, visiting again and again places dear through association, and lingering there a long time.

To-day, however, as she stood in the door looking out on the sparkling river she was occupied with a new train of thought. Voices from the parlor floated out through the window, and she listened to them unthinkingly.

"Well," said her sister-in-law, "she certainly is a lucky girl, but she don't seem to care a bit. Why, I should have been half crazy over such a piece of good fortune at her age. It was a strange will for the old man to make, wasn't it?"

"I suppose," replied Mrs. Strong's voice, "that Mr. Poole wanted to make what reparation he could. I think he has only done what is right."

"He died there alone," said Mrs. Farnaby, "in the night, and alone."

"For that matter," said her daughter-in-law, laughing, "I think I would rather die alone than live alone, as he had done for so many years."

"I wish," said Mrs. Farnaby gently, "that someone had been with him to close his eyes, and perhaps shed a tear for him. I would like to think someone had said a prayer. I wish he had not been alone."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Strong, "he prayed himself; that would have been better still, Mrs. Farnaby."

There was a moment's silence, and then Mrs. Strong rose to take her leave, declining a pressing invitation to wait and see the baby go to bed.

"Come, walk to the gate with me, dear," she said to Josie.

"So you are a rich girl, after all," she remarked as they strolled down the lane.

"Yes," said Josie, "I believe so. It seems very strange and unreal

as yet. I want you to read this letter, Mrs. Strong. It was found in his desk addressed to me, you know."

She drew a large sheet of paper from her pocket, closely covered with cramped, old-fashioned writing. Mrs. Strong hesitated.

"Perhaps it was meant for your eyes only," she said.

"Read it, please," said Josie, "I would rather that you did."

So Mrs. Strong read it, and we, looking over her shoulder, will do the same:

"MY DEAR CHILD: For you are still a child in years, although I have done my best to make you old through suffering.

"It is not possible for us to erase any of the pages of the book of life, or I should gladly blot out what I myself have written there. Nor is it possible for man to change the nature with which he was born; I would do that also if I could.

"Of course, you know I once loved your mother; you look like her, although you will never be as pretty as she was. I am sorry for the misery I brought upon her, for it did me no good, but I do not forgive her. I never shall forgive her.

"Your father was my friend. I, myself, introduced him to your mother. I have not forgiven him either, and I do not regret that his life was unhappy, but I am sorry, very sorry, for the wretchedness which came to you through him, and to your sister also. I am sorry that through me he came to his death; I never meant to take human life. I swear it.

"You will not believe me, perhaps, when I say that in wishing to marry you I was actuated by any motive other than revenge, but I intended to make you happy if I could. However, it is no use to speak of that now.

"You were right in refusing to marry me, and I am glad you can be true to the man who loves you, and true to your promise to him. They tell me you have sent him away and that your engagement is broken. You are wrong. His happiness is at stake as well as your own, and you have no right to embitter his life in this way. Too many men become hard and callous because of a woman's whims; too many women grow old and acid from a mistaken idea of duty. Write to him to come back, and if he is worthy of you he will come gladly.

"I have left you all my property, which is considerable, hoping that you will make better use of it than I have ever done, and because I wish to repair as much as possible some of the mischief I have done. I have no kith or kin to leave it to, and if I had it would make no difference; a man can do what he likes with his own.

"It will not be long before you get the money and this letter, for I am dying. I have known it for some time, and I do not wish to die. I am afraid. I do not believe there is a God, but I do not know, and the uncertainty is unpleasant.

"There is a sealed package in my desk addressed to your mother. Give it to her and tell her——"

Here the letter stopped abruptly, and Mrs. Strong held out her hand for the other sheet.

"There is no more," said Josie; "he must have died that night. It is not dated."

"Poor old man," said Mrs. Strong,—"poor, miserable old man."

"The package addressed to mother," continued Josie, "contained an old picture of her when she was a girl and a plain gold ring—nothing more. He must have loved her very much at one time, I think. I can't help feeling sorry for him."

"Josie," said the older woman, "what he says is true. You have no right to ruin Richard Bradley's life as well as your own."

"If he had ever really loved me," said Josie, with the inconsistency of woman, "he would not have believed me. He would have known I did not want him to go away. He has forgotten all about me by this time; I have not had a word from him since he left. No doubt he is glad to forget me."

The little quiver in the girl's voice appealed to Mrs. Strong's kind heart, but she merely looked down the road at a distant black speck, which was rapidly growing larger, and remarked that she really must go home.

Josie turned to retrace her steps, and her friend walked down the road towards Red Lion, smiling to herself as though something pleased her.

The speck was now transformed into a figure, crowned at one end with a straw hat and terminating at the other in a pair of dusty boots. Mrs. Strong shook her handkerchief, and the straw hat waved in enthusiastic greeting.

"I thought you had not come," she said when within speaking distance; "I waited as long as I dared."

"The train was late," he replied, "and then Mr. Barnett insisted on a few words. I began to believe I would never get here."

"I left Josie at the gate," she remarked casually; "if you hurry you can overtake her before she reaches the house."

"I can never thank you enough for writing to me so often," he said earnestly; "you don't know what your letters have been to me. I never could have held out all this time without them."

"Go on," said Mrs. Strong, laughing; "thank me another time if you choose, when you are not quite so breathless, but don't stop now."

Josie walked slowly up the lane towards the house, but she was not yet ready to go indoors. She was lonely, very lonely, and still she did not want to be with her family, so she turned into the apple-orchard, intending to stay there until supper-time.

Such trees as had escaped the ravages of the storm were laden with

pink and white blossoms, filling the air with fragrance and dropping their petals softly now and then, as though reluctant to relinquish them. Robins called to one another as they flew from tree to tree, while in the distance the river shone, intensely blue to-night and peaceful, with small, white sails glistening in the setting sun, as little fleets of fishing-boats hurried homeward after their day's work.

Josie turned her back to the river; she had looked at it as little as possible since Anna's death. The dull, heavy thing she supposed was her heart was very troublesome just now, and the pain in it would not be overlooked or suppressed. It was there to be recognized and acknowledged; it was meant to hurt, and must fulfil its destiny. Josie's blue eyes were very wistful as she pulled a branch of the tree down to her, laying the delicate blossoms against her face as though she found them vaguely comforting.

She made a pretty picture under the flower-laden tree, or so it appeared to the dusty and travel-stained youth who advanced unnoticed through the orchard, and although he was evidently in a great hurry to get somewhere, he paused to look at it. Unfortunately, however, he stepped on a dry branch, which snapped loudly, and Josie glanced up, surprised at the sound. She looked again, unable to believe her eyes.

"Richard?" she said uncertainly, "Richard?"

"I have come back, Josie," he said. "Have you anything to say to me?"

The branch of the apple-tree swung rapidly back into its accustomed place, for both of Josie's hands were otherwise engaged, and there was nothing to hold it down.



OPPORTUNITY

BY BLANCHE TRENNOR HEATH

"I HAVE no skill to lead," he cried,
"But see, the breach within the wall!"
He grasped a bugle at his side
And blew a battle-call.

They followed where the bugle rang;
They smote the crumbling wall to ground—
Foremost within the breach he sprang,
The man the hour had found!

A ROYAL INTERVIEW WITH ITALY'S QUEEN

By Maud Howe

Author of "A Newport Aquarelle," "The San Rosario Ranch," etc.



PALAZZO RUSTICUCCI, ROME, December 7, 1894.

YESTERDAY was *sirocco*. In consequence the house was full of fine sand blown up from the African desert and everybody was out of humor. In spite of *sirocco*, I saw the King and Queen going to open Parliament. The King, Prince of Naples, and two officers were in the first crystal and gilt coach, the Queen, her mother, the Duchess of Genoa, and a gentleman of the court in the next. The horses, trappings, coachmen, and footmen were magnificent. There were three servants to each of the six royal carriages—one on the box, two standing behind. They wore scarlet coats, white wigs, three-cornered hats, and pink silk stockings. The King and the Prince were in uniform, the Queen and her mother in the last French fashion. Little Guenny Story (the granddaughter of our dear old friends the William Storys) was dreadfully disappointed when she found that the Queen did not always wear a crown. I sympathize with her. I had a place in the loggia of the Palazzo Montecitorio, where Parliament meets, and saw the royalties step out of their carriages and enter the palace.

January 21, 1895.

Yesterday I went to the annual memorial mass for Victor Emmanuel at the Pantheon. The noble old temple—the only one of the Roman buildings which has been in continuous use since it was erected in the first century—was hung with black and cloth of gold. A huge catafalque stood in the middle, directly under the open dome; the whole interior was lighted by classic torches, urns and tripods holding blue fire. A tribune had been constructed for the orchestra and singers. The music, a mass of Cherubini's, was very fine. The catafalque was surrounded by a double line of men who stood facing one another through the long service. The men of the outer circle were soldiers of the King, the men of the inner ring were priests of the Church, for Victor Emmanuel was a good Catholic and died in the faith.

I was in Rome for the first time in 1878, the last winter of his life. I often saw him driving on the Pincio or in the Corso. He was an

extraordinary looking man, fierce, powerful, bizarre, every inch a king; loved and hated accordingly. I remember the intense excitement when the two old enemies, Pius the Ninth and Victor Emmanuel, both lay dying in the city for which they had fought. Would the King be permitted to receive the Sacrament? When it was known that the Pope on his death-bed had sent his blessing to the King in *extremis* all Rome drew a long breath. We went to see *Il Re Galantuomo* lying in state in the *capella ardente* at the Quirinal. He was dressed in full uniform with high riding-boots, the royal robe of red velvet and ermine was spread over the inclined plane on which he lay, the crown and sceptre at his feet. The chapel blazed with candles; in each of the four corners knelt a brown Capuchin monk telling his beads. Signor Simone Peruzzi, chamberlain to the King, watched one night beside the body. He was alone for the moment when he heard a deep sigh, saw the King's breast heave. The matter was explained by the physicians afterwards. I remember to this day the thrill in Peruzzi's voice when he spoke of the dead King's sigh.

March 10, 1895.

Mrs. Potter Palmer and I have had a private audience with the Queen. The visit went off very well. We arrived at the Quirinal Palace at two o'clock, and were received by the Marchesa Villamarina and two other court ladies, with whom we talked for perhaps ten minutes. A tiny old woman dressed in mourning, looking like the Fairy Blackstick, came out from her audience just as we entered the Queen's reception-room for ours. She must have been a privileged person, for we had been warned not to wear black and not to wear hats, bonnets being *de rigueur*. As I do not own a bonnet, Mrs. Palmer kindly lent me a charming one, fresh from Paris—a few days later, when she was received by the Pope, she wore my Spanish mantilla. The Queen, who was seated on a sofa, rose as we entered and shook hands cordially with us. She is still beautiful, her hair magnificent, her eyes kind and keen. When you visit royalty you must only speak when you are spoken to; the choice of the topic of conversation thus remains with the royal personage. You must always say "your Majesty," and you must make three reverences on entering and on leaving the presence. In all this I was tutored by Marion Crawford, who has often been "received," and whose books the Queen is said to read with pleasure. She speaks English perfectly, by the way. She had seen an article in a late magazine—*Scribner's*, I think—on American country houses; she spoke of those at Newport, said that, "judging from the illustrations, they must be very fine." She showed us a grand piano at the end of the room, saying that it was an American instrument, a Steinway, and that "it had a very brilliant action." With Mrs. Palmer the Queen spoke of the World's Fair. Mr. MacVeagh had pre-

sented her with a copy of the book I edited on the Woman's Department of the Chicago Exposition. The audience lasted about twenty minutes; then the Queen rose, the signal for us to withdraw. We made our three courtesies and backed successfully from the room. The Queen is much beloved; she has real charm, besides being good and clever.

ST. AGNELLO DI SORRENTO, March 18, 1895.

Last Monday we left Rome in a rain-storm and came here to break up obstinate colds. We are delightfully established at the Cocumella, an old Jesuit monastery turned into a hotel. There is less of the odor of sanctity—a peculiar mildewed smell the monks leave behind them—than is usual in such places. Our windows command an astonishing view of the Bay of Naples and Mt. Vesuvius. To the right, about a quarter of a mile away, is Villa Crawford, where we are most kindly welcomed by the ladies; the man of the house is away. The children are charming; the villa ideal; it stands on the edge of a high cliff leaning over the sea. The grounds, filled with flowers and fruit-trees, are seamed with quaintly paved walks. On the left of the house is a terrace, where they dine in summer. Here a flaming heart in gray and white paving-stones took my fancy. The house is large and luxurious.

To-day is Palm Sunday. The chambermaid who brings my morning coffee brought me a bit of olive-branch, instead of palm, from early service. Later we went to high mass at the cathedral in Sorrento. The procession was headed by the Bishop, his acolytes, and some smart young canons in rose-colored satin capes. After the mass the procession marched through the town led by a group of bronzed fishermen and boys dressed in white robes, with bright blue *moire* capes, and loose oriental white hoods over their heads. They all carried yellow palm-branches in their hands. It was the most perfect contrast of color imaginable.

Yesterday I saw the nets hauled in. The men and women, old and young, form a line upon the beach, take hold upon the rope, and with a graceful, swinging motion pull in the seine inch by inch, as they did in the days of St. Peter. The Sorrentines are a handsome and seem a kindly people; there are comparatively few beggars here.

Throughout the *Piano* (plain) *di Sorrento* thousands are employed in the manufacture of silk stockings, scarves, carved and inlaid wood, coral ornaments, tortoise-shell combs, and jewelry. I dare not enter a shop for fear of temptation. The Italian spoken is far pleasanter than the nasal Neapolitan; the chief peculiarity is the dropping of the final vowel. Maria, the dark-eyed chambermaid, asks if she shall make the *lett*, for *letto* (bed), and speaks of Sorrent, doman,

and Sabad, meaning Sorrento, *domani* (to-morrow), and *Sabado* (Saturday).

The trees in the garden are laden with oranges and lemons, the roses are beginning, the birds are singing. The service of the hotel is excellent, table good, room with fireplace and afternoon sun; for all this, pension and wine included, we pay six francs—one dollar and twenty cents—a day, with permission to roam in the garden and pick as many oranges as we like. I am reminded of Hugh Norman's saying, "When I have only a dollar and a half a day left to live on, I shall retire to the Cocumella and pass the rest of my life there." We have *uve secce* for luncheon, grapes dipped in wine and spices, rolled up with bits of citron in grape-leaves, tied in little bundles, and roasted. They may be kept half the year, and are among the dainties of the world. The miniature Italian Count who married Mrs. Tom Thumb, *veuve*, said when he came to take tea at our house, "*In Italia se mangia bene*" ("In Italy one eats well"). He was right; we hear less about Italian than about French cookery, but it is quite as good—the range of dishes is wider—and shows more imagination. There is a great deal about cooking in my letters; so there is in life. Fire, cookery, and civilization seem to be inseparable. Speaking of fire, the women about here say that Vesuvius, across the Bay there, sets a bad example smoking his eternal pipe. The men sit watching him, presently they imitate him, try and see how big a cloud of smoke they can make.

Vesuvius dominates the whole landscape. He finally got the better of us, drew us like a magnet; so, finding that the ascent can be made from here as well as anywhere, we gave a day to it. The road, an ascending spiral, embraces the great black mountain like the coils of a serpent. At first it leads through pleasant vineyards; when these are left behind the dreadful lava fields begin. The weird forms of the petrified rivers of lava, once red and molten, now grim and black, suggest human bodies writhing in the clutch of horrid monsters. Here a huge trunk madly wrenches itself from the toils, there a vast body lies supine and agonized, the last resistance passed. When we left our carriage at the foot of the funicular railroad I felt I had passed through several circles of the Inferno. Dante must have received many of the impressions he transmits to us from Vesuvius. At the summit, when I looked down into the crater, at the slippery, slimy sides, with their velvet bloom of sulphur, I saw where the fathers of the Church and the early painters, Fra Angelico among them, got their ideas of hell. Marcus Aurelius, my guide, bibulous, muscular, with a grip of iron, found a point from which, when the wind lifted the veil of thick white smoke, I could, by leaning well over the crater, see the flood at the bottom surge, seethe, toss up from its depth big, red-hot stones, which dropped back again while the mountain roared and scolded. It was an

awesome day. Vesuvius has given me not only a new understanding of the poetry and religion of Italy, but of the Italian character, which it has had a share in forming. On our way down we ran over a soldier, the front wheel of our carriage passing across his leg. We were three people; it must have hurt him, but he got up and walked off cursing us vehemently. I wish the Abyssinians might find the Italian soldiers equally invincible in Africa.

ST. AGNELLO DI SORRENTO, Easter Sunday, 1895.

I find the services of Holy Week more impressive here than in Rome. Thursday afternoon, on a lonely road by the sea, we heard a strange, primitive chanting,—the music might have been Palestrina's,—and came suddenly upon a procession led by children carrying the usual emblems of the Passion, and some I have never seen before. The story of the betrayal and the crucifixion was told by symbols, the basin of Pilate, the cock and sword of Peter, the bag of Judas, the scourge, the pillar, the spear, the sponge, the cross, the crown of thorns, and the winding-sheet. The washing of the apostles' feet at the cathedral Holy Thursday was really moving. A dozen poor old fishermen, scrubbed as clean as possible, represented the twelve; they were each rewarded by a loaf of bread and a franc at the end of the service. Early Good Friday morning, before the sun was up, a band of peasants passed through the town bearing a life-sized image of the Madonna dressed all in white going out to look for her son. After sundown they returned, bringing back the mother from her search, clad in mourning. She had found her son; behind her the figure of the dead Christ was carried on a bier. The people stood gravely watching the bearers as they passed through the dark, torch-lit streets. On Saturday, as we were driving, a cannon sounded at twelve o'clock in token of the resurrection. Our driver threw himself from the cab and, touching his head to the ground three times, remained kneeling long enough to repeat several aves.

PALAZZO RUSTICUCCI, ROME, March 27, 1895.

We were glad to get back to Rome, to the terrace. Wall-flowers are out, daffodils, pansies, primroses, forget-me-nots, and lilies-of-the-valley. Two large lilac-bushes and three spiræa will be in bloom by Sunday. There is snow on Leonessa; it is a trifle chilly up here on the terrace where I write, but it is near "peaks and stars" and very near peace. I weed the flowers, collect the snails that prey upon our pansies and threaten our roses. The awful gardens where Nero's living torches flamed lay just below my windows, where the Piazza of St. Peter's now is. Soracte, Leonessa, with all the rest of the purple Alban hills looked down on that sight as calmly as they look on my lilies and me. There is no place in the world where one feels as small as in Rome. The sunflowers come up, each with his little

burst shell of seed on his head, which he soon throws away; so the lesson of the new life springing from the old is studied in the shadow of Angelo's dome. The great church greeted me like a friend. Tourists criticise the architecture: I do not deny faults, I only do not see them. We have a nightingale of our own at last. His name is Pan. He sings gloriously. What a thrill his voice has! We feed him on bullock's heart. Jeremy Bentham, the tortoise, knew me; he never was so friendly before; snaps fresh lettuce-leaves out of my hand without trying to nip my fingers. Our great Thomas cat threatened Pan, and my life was a constant struggle to keep them apart, so I have sent Pan to the studio, where J. has a falcon and two pigeons. He threatens to buy a jackdaw, and was with difficulty restrained from purchasing a baby fox. It was such an engaging little animal that I confess to have wanted it myself. The happy family at the studio is cared for by Vincenzo, a young painter, a scholar of J.'s. In the old days, when J. was a pupil of Villegas, Vincenzo was the studio boy who washed their brushes. J. thinks he has some talent and has given him a whole floor in his great barrack of a studio.

Pompilia and Philamena had swept and garnished the house with flowers in honor of our return. All our friends and our small world of hangers-on (the ancient Romans called them clients) welcomed us kindly, with the single exception of the porter.

Porters seem to be natural enemies, like mothers-in-law. We all know shining exceptions, but the rule commonly holds good of both. None of our friends are on speaking terms with their porters. Our old porter was dreadful—dirty, drunk, disreputable. At first the new one seemed a treasure. J. had recommended him for the place chiefly on account of his lovely tenor voice. The man—we call him Ernesto “because it is his name”—used to sit at work (he is a mender of leather) on the sidewalk opposite the studio singing airs from the latest operas, *Bohème*, *Pagliacci*, *Iris*, but singing them like an artist. It helped J., shut up at his work in the big studio, to hear him, and in a reckless moment he spoke to Signor Mazzocchi about the singing saddler. Behold him installed with his big, white-haired wife, Maria, his little daughter, Lucrezia, brown and bonnie, in a grim room without light or air (you would not put a cat in such a hole)—still, an improvement on their former quarters. The landlord is responsible for the porter's wages. We give him a *mancia* of ten francs a month, extras for extra service, and a present at Christmas and at Easter. His duty towards us is to receive our cards and letters and bring them up the three long flights of stairs. Our mail grew staler and staler. The Paris New York *Herald* (read by all Americans in Europe), instead of being served with breakfast, arrived barely in time for luncheon. J. had built on the first landing a little open stall, light and airy, where

Ernesto could stitch his old saddles and harnesses and sing his jolly songs. Alas and alas! there is a wine-shop opposite the palace, there is a *trattoria* on the ground floor next the baker's; both proprietors are generous and soft-hearted. Somehow the fat wife, the slim daughter, are fed, but Ernesto stitches no longer, sings no more. Sober and poor, a rival to Pan. Rich and drunk, he is sourly silent. It is a dangerous thing to play at being providence! The *postino* now brings up the mail and delivers it at our door, *ultimo piano* (top floor).

February, 1896.

Last week I took Isabel to a ball at the Princess del Drago's. We have kept Ernesto up a good deal lately, so I took the key of the big *portone* and told him that he need not wait. Isabel's maid, Franceline, was to sit up and open the old green door, the key of which weighs two pounds and will not go into my pocket. We wore our very best gowns and trinkets, and Isabel had a pretty tinsel ribbon in her hair which sparkled like diamonds. It was a great dance; the drive home at three in the morning under a full silver moon, past Hilda's tower, the fountain of the Triton, and the hospital of Santo Spirito was not the least of the fun. We met a few empty cabs returning to their stables, just as we entered the Borgo Nuovo passed a pair of grave *carabinieri* (military police) pacing their beat, wrapped in long black cloaks, their three-cornered hats drawn over their eyes. Our good coachman, Cesar, opened the *portone*, found and lighted the candle left on the lower step as had been arranged, and bade us good-night. We picked up our skirts and went up the two easy flights chattering about the party. At the second landing we stopped beside the Etruscan ladies to rest before breasting the third short, steep flight. I rang softly, not to disturb the sleepers, and waited. I rang loudly, and waited. Through the door came a gentle, familiar murmur. Then the cracked bell rang out a tocsin that should have roused the whole palace; still no sound from within save that rhythmical murmur; we beat and kicked upon the door till hands and feet were tired; we called, bellowed, screamed, shrieked for a matter of five minutes, until the terrified Franceline, guilty yet denying sleep, threw open the door. I was just dropping off into dreamland when I heard the *portone* shut heavily. As the stairway belongs exclusively to us, I sat up and listened. There was a hubbub on the stairs. I heard Ernesto's voice protesting, calling upon the Trinity first as a whole, then severally, upon all the saints, last and loudest upon the Madonna, to witness his innocence. A stern, accusing voice drowned Ernesto's. I threw on a wrapper, ran to the door, and listened. "Where are they, then? Make me to see them, those ladies, all festive with jewels. Did we not ourselves behold them enter this *portone*,

laughing and talking? this *portone*, brute breast, of which one knows that thou, and thou only, hast the key. Did we not hear, we out in the street, feminine yells horrible, to make one tremble, and thou sayest thou heardest nothing? Animal, where are they, then? What have you done with them, those ladies so bright, so beautiful? Robbed, murdered, dying, perhaps—possibly dead.”

“By the mass, by Peter and Paul, I was asleep in my bed at ten o'clock. Ask Maria, ask Lucrezia, ask the *padrone* of the wine-shop, who turned me out at that hour. I knew nothing till you came, *illustrissimi*, you tore me from my bed. What do I know of the ladies? I saw them go at quarter before eleven with Cesare in a coupé. Is it sensible to ask me? Ask that fat pig, Cesare. If they are dead, he is responsible.”

“Might it not be well to ring the bell and ask the Signore?” said a third voice, that of the elder *carabiniere*. Explanations, apologies, thanks, “*e buona notte!*”

February 4, 1897.

The ball at the embassy last night (given by Mr. MacVeagh, the retiring Ambassador, for the King and Queen) went off very well. Her Majesty looked charming and danced the quadrille with great spirit. Some of the dancers forgot the figures, she put them all straight, was so winning and fascinating that the Americans were enthusiastic about her.

The King, who does not dance, seemed bored. He is first and above all else a soldier, a man of action. I watched him as he stood pulling his big mustache, talking to an ancient ambassador; by his expression it was easy to see he would be glad when it was over and time to go home. He was in uniform as usual, carrying his white-plumed helmet under his arm. His honest face had that puzzled look it so often wears; no wonder! Of all the monarchs in the world, his riddles are the hardest to read. The Queen wore a superb dress of pale blue satin with point lace and her famous pearls. The King gave her a string of pearls on each anniversary of their marriage, it is said, till at their silver wedding she protested she could not bear the weight of another rope. The finest jewels after the royal pearls were Mrs. Potter Palmer's. She wore the crown of pearls and diamonds I remember her wearing at her reception for the Spanish Infanta Eulalia at the time of the World's Fair at Chicago. The supper was served in an immense room, the handsomest in the apartment, which occupies the *piano nobile* of the Palazzo Ludovisi. Nothing could be better arranged for entertaining in the grand manner than the present American Embassy. You enter an enormous ante-camera, where the servants take your wraps, pass on through a second waiting-room into a long corridor which runs the whole length

of the palace. The state rooms all lead from this corridor; they have communicating doors, so that standing in the doorway of the supper-room one looks through the two drawing-rooms to the ballroom, where on a stage the musicians are seated. The diplomats all wore court dress. A ball where the men as well as the women are splendid is naturally far more brilliant than one of our balls, where the girls monopolize the finery. The most striking figure there was Russian in the dress of a Cossack colonel, cartridge belt, jewelled weapons, and all, and—as if to heighten the warlike look—a black patch over one eye.

I never saw such a crowd around a supper-table. Refreshments at most entertainments here are simpler than would be believed at home. In this the Italians are more civilized than the English or ourselves. The supper last night was of the generous American order. The Romans seemed to enjoy it and did not limit themselves to biscuits and lemonade. The army officers in especial took kindly to the good things.

To-day I looked into St. Agostino and saw the beautiful miracle-working Madonna. She is a lovely marble woman with a less lovely *bambino*. The mother is literally covered with gems; she has strings and strings of pearls about her neck, her fingers are laden to the very tips with rings; the child is hung with scores of watches. Both heads are deformed with ugly crowns. The Madonna is by Jacopo Sansovino, a Florentine sculptor of the fifteenth century. She is much adored and quite adorable. She is very rich, has a good income of her own from the various legacies she has received. On the pedestal below her silver foot—the marble one was long since kissed out of existence—an inscription states that “on the assurance of Pius the Seventh an indulgence of two hundred days will be granted to whoever shall devoutly touch the foot of this holy image and recite an ave.”

I also went to see the Sala Borgia, newly opened at the Vatican. It contains one of the most splendid pieces of decoration I have ever seen—three rooms painted by Pinturicchio; they have been closed for twenty years, having been used as libraries; the walls were covered with books. Artistic Rome has gone mad about them. They surpass everything in the way of decoration here save the Sistine Chapel and the Stanze of Raphael.

June 29 and 30, 1897.

To-night the Feast of St. Peter is to be celebrated by a dinner-party on the terrace. That old statue of Jupiter across the way, or whoever it used to be called before it was held venerable as a portrait of St. Peter, is dressed in his best vestments, his finest tiara, wears his most sumptuous sapphire ring on his stiff forefinger. The whole Borgo is under the protection of St. Peter, and I always make a little feast on his day. There are many sermons preached about him; I heard an excellent one in a neighboring church. The object of the saints' days is to keep alive the memory of noble lives. Just as on

Washington's Birthday the old stories of Valley Forge and Yorktown are recited year after year, so the story of Peter is told on the 29th of June every year. I was surprised to hear Signor Rudolfo Lanciani say he thought it possible St. Peter had actually been in Rome, that the great church may cover his last resting-place as well as perpetuate his name.

Ripe figs are supposed to be eaten first on St. John's Day, the 25th of June. Tradition says that the first plate of figs was always presented on that day to Pope Pius the Ninth. Either figs are late this season, or Pompilia has been slow about finding them, for the purple figs which were served with cold boiled ham for our luncheon to-day are the first we have seen this season. Naturally there was no second course to such a superlative first. The terrace dinner was a great success. The table was set under the *pergola* covered thick with the second crop of roses. We hung *lucerne* (brass lamps for burning olive oil) from the yellow canes of the crossed bamboos and lighted the farther end of our airy dining-room with colored lanterns. Among the guests were Monsignor William O'Connell, director of the American College, a genial Irish-American priest, and Dr. William Bull, physician to the American Embassy, guide, philosopher, and friend of all wandering Americans. He is beloved of artists, a collector of antiquities, a genial not a melancholy Dane, a wise physician, and one of the most picturesque figures in our Roman world. The sun was still staining the sky when we sat down. By the time old Nena brought the ices from the *trattoria* below, the full yellow moon came up over the Sabine Hills, flooding every corner with its yellow light. Below, in the baker's shop, the nightingale sang to the roses. Our best rose, *il Capitano Christi*, is a very large, flat, pink rose, growing on a stiff stalk with long, fierce thorns. It opens wide as a saucer, and is of the most rapturous, tender color. It is grafted on an excellent common-place red rose-tree, a generous and prolific bloomer, which yields a brave harvest, the first to blossom, the last to wither, always to be depended on if I want roses in a hurry. The Captain gives a rare rose, never more than one at a time, but I know that it is to the Captain's rose that the baker's nightingale sings.



QUÆRITUR

BY MARY TERESA WAGGAMAN

HEIGHO! Here's Wisdom's coffer
 All gorged with gain—
 To open who dares offer?
 Its key is Pain!

THE GIRL WITH THE BANJO

By Jean D. Hollowell



WHEN you go to a house party your relationship to your hostess is pretty closely defined by the type of room assigned for your occupancy. If you are a stranger, you are given the state chambers with ornate furniture, linen sheets, and a private bath. If you are a casual acquaintance, you may yet hope for a second-story room with the usual quota of modern improvements. If you are a real friend, you must content yourself with a third-story,—back or front,—and if you are a relative,—Heaven help you!—you may consider yourself lucky to be tucked away in a Morris chair in the sewing-room.

When Mrs. Dana gave the house party of which I write I congratulated myself on a formal kind of intimacy which would at least warrant me in expecting a third-story front. I mean never to get so intimate as a third-story back with a movable washstand, but I am an inveterate house-party girl, and when one goes to a dozen or fifteen house parties a year it is pretty hard sometimes in the general excitement not to drift perilously near to pet names and Morris chairs.

Anyone who is familiar with successful house parties knows perfectly well that people are invited solely as types—never as individuals. Believe me, then, I mean no personal egotism when I affirm that I am in great demand at house parties—not because I am beautiful or brilliant or diplomatic, but simply and solely because, in house-party parlance, I am, or rather represent, a *b-a-n-j-o*. Banjo-playing is my one accomplishment. I can play the banjo like—well, “like the devil.” The quotation is not my own.

When the people in my set give house parties they invite only people with tricks. That is the secret of a successful house party. Every guest must be a social specialist. If you want to be in popular demand at house parties, you must be a writer or an actor or a missionary or *something*. You must have a trick of speech or a trick of silence, a trick of ingenuousness or a trick of cynicism, or, best of all, a trick of flirting. Now, banjo-playing is in a way a trivial thing, and yet it is a trick that may at times out-trick all others with its wilful, subtle, saucy interruptiveness. The banjo never has a legitimate chance of its own, but it is always making or unmaking chances

for others. That is why I am in such demand at house parties. I am a very present help in times of trouble; I have saved more than one mismanaged dinner; I have rallied more than one disgruntled guest; I have beguiled more than one *Enfant Terrible*; I have bombarded more than one undesirable tête-à-tête; I have covered up more than one attack of Bacchanalian hiccoughs. But, believe me, I take no credit for myself. My banjo is a *witch*. Of course, my invitations always read, "You and your banjo," but I should like the frankness better if the phraseology were reversed, for I am just an insignificant slip of a thing with a little brown face like a witch-gypsy's, and a nature—oh, bother!—a nature all claws and purrs, like a kitty.

When Mrs. Dana's invitation came to this particular house party I accepted with alacrity, for, in the first place, Mrs. Dana's house parties are often very amusing, and, in the second place, I happened to have some distractingly pretty gowns which were just pinning to be worn. So, banjo in one hand, dress-suit case in the other, with trunk to follow, I presented myself at the appointed time.

It was my third visit at Mrs. Dana's, and I was fighting down my natural greeting of intimate affection with the absolute assurance of following the neat maid-servant up to the third-story front, when Mrs. Dana rushed out of the library and kissed me with startling effusiveness on both cheeks. I chilled at once with a horrible suspicion. "Oh my dear child!" gasped my hostess with disheartening intimacy, "I am so distressed, but I have got to ask a *great* favor of you. I had planned to give you the pink-rose room on the third floor,—the front one, you know, with the long cheval mirror,—but I have just had the most unexpected letter from Bishop Barrows and his wife; they have reconsidered their declination and decided to come after all, so, *dear child*, will you ever forgive me,"—here Mrs. Dana fairly took me in her hysterical arms while visions of Morris chairs flitted in green velour before my staring eyes,—“so, dear child, I have got to ask you to take Billy's room, and it hasn't been fixed up or dusted or *anything*, no one has ever slept in it since Billy died”—and then Mrs. Dana's china-blue eyes softened suddenly with real tears, so that I said instantly, in a muffled, clothy voice against her shoulder, "Why, my dear, I'd just as soon have Billy's room as not, and don't you worry a bit about dust or anything; I'll be happy as a princess anywhere there is a bed."

"Oh, there's bed enough in Billy's room," Mrs. Dana vouchsafed with suddenly renewed cheerfulness, "but nobody's had time to do anything; the maids are in a perfect panic over their extra preparations, and—I can't bear to go near the room since Billy died, even if I had a moment to spare. Mary will show you the way up. Oh my *d-e-a-r child*, will you *ever* forgive me?"

So, gathering up my ruffled skirts and tugging at my banjo, I followed Mary and the suit-case up the broad staircase, past the state chambers, up the gradually narrowing climb past the pink-rose room, up the winding, dark, top-story stairs, realizing grimly that I who had balked at the callow, wholesome comfort of a Morris chair was about to be consigned to the family mausoleum. Pleasant thought!

When we reached Billy's room the door was locked. I had never heard of Billy before, but I had ample time to soliloquize concerning his probable age, death, and general attainments while Mary fumbled with the door-key, grunting discordantly over the difficulty of her task. Then at last the door opened and Mary tottered in ahead with the suit-case and opened the shutters, lit the gas, felt of the bed, blew at the dust on the mantelpiece, and scurried downstairs again to answer her mistress's frantic ring for assistance.

I shut the door behind her, and locked it and bolted it. There was a dusty, mussy fire laid in the grate, and I put a match to it and sent it roaring up the chimney in cheerful, yellow waves. Out of the blaze came a vague, elusive memory of cigarettes. "There is a man in this room," I said, "I smell him." Then—I am more afraid of dead people than of anything else in the world—I looked under the bed and in the closet and behind the bureau. But there was no harm anywhere, only that awful, creepy, ghostly chill that does not have to conform to thermometers. I cried a little, and I laughed quite a little, and I stood sick-heartedly and surveyed the room. And I wondered and I wondered.

I am no Sherlock Holmes, but it did not take me long to conclude that whoever Billy was, he was no innocent babe who had died in his cooing infancy.

It was a very human-looking room, radiantly, gorgeously, *flauntingly* alive, from the crimson paper on the walls to the tarnished glitter of some German favor on the mantel; a big, rambling attic room, fairly reeking with color and whim and temperament, crowded with books and pictures and cluttered with rods and guns,—altogether, just the sort of a den that a man named Billy would have made for himself in the faraway top of his mother's Boston house. It was a dear room, every inch of it fairly *screaming* life at you. But Billy himself was quite dead, and the dust lay sneezing-deep over all his treasures.

After due deliberation I went over and sat on Billy's great four-poster bed and curled my feet up safe away from the grab-ghosts that are liable to lurk under strange beds, and then and there I made a solemn compact with the Dead.

"Billy," I whispered, "I don't know who you are nor why you are dead, but if I am going to live in your room for seven long, spooky, black nights, *you must not come back to bother me*. I'm not accus-

tomed to sharing my room with anyone. I took your den just to accommodate your mother, and the accommodation is a very unpleasant experience indeed for me. Now I will dust your room and I will keep a bright fire going and I will be kind to your things, *but you must not come back to bother me*. I want that distinctly understood."

Then I laughed aloud, because it was a silly thing to make a solemn compact with the dead, and I picked up my banjo to play some jolly tra-la-la thing, but two strings snapped deliberately in my hands. My fingers were horribly cold.

Billy's room was certainly very dusty, and just to show that I dared I went and wrote my name—"Jocynl, Jocynl, Jocynl"—all over the top of the mantelpiece and the desk and the bureau. But that wasn't enough, so I climbed up in a chair and punched a cloud of dust and feathers out of the great fat stomach of a stuffed sea-gull. But even that did not completely rally my retreating spirits.

It was an awful-looking room to come back to alone at bedtime, so I decided all at once that it would be wiser to begin my explorations and repairs in the early, safe time of that present moment. There were no towels in the rack to help my first housewifely instinct, but Billy's room was so immediately—so insistently—dusty that I rummaged in my dress-suit case for material. There was nothing there to help me but my best little lace petticoat. Now, I have a weakness for lace petticoats, but Billy's room must be dusted at once—hadn't I promised? So I took my little skirt, albeit wryly, and swished it round over the tops of bookcases and tables and across the faces of pictures that really—needed petticoats very badly indeed.

"And, Billy," I said, trying to break the hideous dusty silence,—
"Billy, did you ever have your room dusted before with a *soupy* little lace petticoat?" But Billy did not answer, for how could he? Billy was dead, and had promised not to come back, and probably couldn't come back anyway, for, judging from appearances, Billy was without doubt a lost soul.

Thus it was that I, Jocynl Merrill, social butterfly and banjo dilettante, organized myself by emergency into a Board of Health and a Code of Morals, and became the most intimate possible confidante of a dead man whom I had never seen. And then and there I resolved that never again as long as I lived should anyone but myself dust my room at home, though, goodness knows, *my* pictures would not quicken a turtle nor *my* books disgrace a family Christmas-tree.

There was nothing exactly vulgar about Billy's bohemianism, but yet his zest for beauty and wonder would have broken my heart if he had been *my* Billy. He had a hurricane sort of nature, I guess, and I suppose a boy with storms like that in him has really *got* to be shipwrecked, and then it's hit or miss whether the Captain or the Stoker finally gets to shore.

But I didn't have time to soliloquize very long, for I was a sight to behold by that time, and when the dressing-bell rang I had to hurry like everything to get hot water and towels, and dress myself and tune my banjo. And then at the last second, when I ran back to get a scarf out of the closet, I found a pair of red slippers,—Billy's slippers, I suppose,—and just because they felt so chilled and scary I took them out and put them by the fire, and as I turned round on the threshold to view my cheerful work,—the bright room, the roaring blaze, the big chair, and the red slippers,—“Humph,” I thought, “it looks more like a homecoming than a memorial,” and my cheeks burned with the irreverence or something of the suggestion.

My gown was a pretty, rose-colored thing, but it slunk in hatefully round my knees for lack of my best petticoat,—my trunk had not come,—and I was bad-tempered and uncomfortable when I reached the drawing-room and found the whole company assembled and waiting for me.

We filed out to the dining-room with the awful ceremony that invariably characterizes first dinners, but we got through the pompous meal somehow, and after the coffee in the drawing-room, when the air was blue with smoke, Mrs. Dana began with provoking promptness,—

“Now, my dear, won't you play us a few jolly tunes on that wonderful little banjo of yours?”

So I played a few little tunes, but they were not jolly, for my banjo was sulky and whined and whimpered and mourned. Now a complaining banjo is the most God-forsaken sound in the world, for a banjo is at most a brawling roisterer, and its occasional fits of repentance are as stridently crude and shrill as a street-gamin's hymn-tunes. Yet people go daft over my banjo when it mourns, for there is something about the incongruity of its mood that tears your heart out.

We were a mixed company that evening. There was a white muslin ingénue flirting rather starchily with a college professor; there was a lolling young emotional actress who took house parties hygienically, as most people take sanitariums; there were two college women trying to interest a Cuban War hero in settlement work; there was a young Englishman who was over here studying American politics; there was the Bishop's wife, who was interested in the negro question, and there was the Bishop, who was interested in me. I do not mean romantically interested, exactly, for the Bishop had never seen me before, but ecclesiastically impressed, as with a new and alluring kind of heathen.

It was not a very interesting evening. The first evening at a house party never is. Everybody wishes that he hadn't come, and the subsequent success or failure of a party depends on whether that original opinion is justified or not.

We were a mixed company, as you see, but Mrs. Dana always prided

herself on her mixed companies and the ensuing brilliancy thereof. There is a certain amount of truth in her theory too, for people who like each other very much are apt to be a bit maudlin conversationally.

When I first began to play the Bishop yawned slothfully behind his fat fingers, and watched me with the good-natured tolerance which churchmen are apt to bestow on young society people of a different denomination. But with my second whimpering, insouciant melody the Bishop sat up uneasily, and when I finished playing with a curious, childish, treble attempt at an anthem, the Bishop rose and came over and sat down beside me and quizzed me with a personal urbanity that was startling.

"You have a wonderful gift," he volunteered in a massive whisper, "but why profane it over such a frivolous instrument as a banjo? You should be playing the organ in God's sanctuary."

"In God's sanctuary?" I queried, with the only real ingenuous look I have saved over from my débutante days,—*"in God's sanctuary?"* and I snatched up my banjo and began playing the wildest, rowdiest jig-time you ever heard in your life, and the ingénue got up and began to cavort around the room, with the English politician after her, and the college women beat time with their common-sense heels, and the Bishop's wife began to wave her picture of Booker Washington to and fro, and the Bishop—I vow you could hear the Bishop's heart pounding like a Junebug at a prayer-meeting. When you really come to think of it, banjo-playing must be a bit chaotic to a man who has lived on nothing less pompous than a triple-keyboard pipe organ.

Then came the applause. I am not a very pretty young person, and I would like, of course, to be stunningly beautiful, so that men fell dead on the street when I went by, but I would gladly forego my wildest dream of beauty for that one illuminated second at dinner-party, picnic, or even church fair, when *I am recognized*. That second of recognition is my soul's elixir. I could have moved mountains when the ingénue came and perched on the arm of my chair and rubbed her cheek against mine—ingénues are usually such blasé little people.

Then my conscience smote me about the Bishop, and I smiled at him the mildest evangelical smile I could imagine, and begged him to take me out in the hall to get a breath of air, where I explained to him that I wasn't really profaning my gift at all, because the banjo is the only thing in the world that I can play, and that a gypsy told me once that I was cursed—or blessed—with the ability to bring out the worst in good people and the best in bad people. The Bishop, however, could not affirm this prophecy, as affirmation of either clause would be equally damning to his own character. The gypsy told me also to be careful when I chose a husband, as I should drive a good man bad, but could turn a devil into a saint. Well, there you have it with

my music: I can make a banjo sing like a whimsical heavenly choir, but I make a church organ sound as though it were drunk. So what should I do with a man? How long would he stay good—or bad—in my hands? The Bishop did not volunteer to solve my perplexity, but he never left my side for the entire evening.

When we sang college songs, when we discussed philanthropy, when we admired Mrs. Dana's curios, the Bishop remained steadfastly in my train, and just before bedtime, when we were all seated around the fire,—the Bishop and I perceptibly on the outer edge of the circle,—I bristled up courage and whispered to him, "Who was Billy Dana?"

"Billy Dana?" mused the Bishop. "Why, Billy Dana was Mrs. Dana's only son, and a sad young scamp too, if rumor speaks the truth. He began running away as soon as he could walk, and the last time he ran, he ran once too often, for he enlisted in the army, went to the Philippines, and was killed, as served him right, in some inexcusably dare-devil racket with the natives. He was a bad young man," gloated the Bishop, "and I only hope he repented at the last. It was a terrible ending, and should have startled the other young men of his set into paths of righteousness. His mother has erected a superb memorial window to him at St. Francis's, and has endowed a large memorial charitable fund in his memory. Ah me, to think that a young man's death should be of more help than his life——"

Then my highest banjo string snapped viciously in my face,—a way it has sometimes,—and I went up to bed with a stinging, narrow welt across my cheek.

Billy's room looked very cheerful in the firelight, and after I had turned up the gas and poked under the bed and behind the portières I felt fairly comfortable, though there was certainly an undeniable presence in the room, a presence that made itself known in elusive smell of cigarettes, and in an occasional creak along the floor, or a rustle at the window. It did not seem quite honorable to me for Billy to come back in smoke and chair-joints, but I have noticed that live men are very apt to modify promises to suit later conveniences, and I suppose the dead have some privileges. I was pretty frightened that first night, I admit. I am a little bit afraid of night, anyway, and I know of nothing more suggestive of infinity, eternity, and all the scares than to be left alone in a strange room at midnight with a dress that fastens up the back. But I somehow succeeded in getting out of my clothes, and with a fair compromise between my fears and Mrs. Dana's gas bill I climbed with some misgivings into bed.

Now I usually sleep as stolidly as a log of wood. I'm not at all the kind of person who thrashes round all over a bed. But the next morning I solemnly swear that there was the imprint of a large head on the farther pillow. You can imagine I went down to breakfast feeling pretty strange.

But the day went pleasantly, and when night came I just left the gas burning half-way up, and I put the great, round, ninny face of my banjo on the pillow beside me, and it was a great comfort in the night when things creaked to reach out and strike a reassuring discord of banjo strings.

I got rather nervous as the days went by, but I grew very fond of the room, and very curious and pitiful concerning Billy Dana. Of course, in order to keep up at all I had to be awfully frivolous and scoffing with myself, but I did take good care of Billy Dana's things, and when Sunday came I actually went to church at St. Francis's with Mrs. Dana and the Bishop and his wife. The Bishop preached and was rather embarrassingly gratified at my attendance. I didn't like Billy's memorial window. It was a great, shiny, showy, gleamy affair, with a perfectly huge bunch of pure white Easter lilies. Why, it looked like a young Girl-Saint's memorial, and I somehow had a feeling that Billy wouldn't have liked it, that it was the sort of window that Billy knew would make the fellows laugh, even if they didn't mean to. And it said on it in big, leaded letters:

"WILTON DANA.

"DIED, JUNE, 1901, IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY."

And I didn't like that either, for it was a lie. Billy Dana didn't die in the service of his country; Billy Dana died doing *stunts*, and that's the whole truth about that! And I fancy Billy was the last boy in the world to want to put on airs about an adventure.

When I came home from church I went directly to my room, and then and there I did the nerviest thing I ever did in my life: I took all the letters out of Billy Dana's top desk drawer and *burned* them, for fear I should yield to my itching temptation to read them and find out really just what sort of a man Billy was. And I took a few books that were best unread and burned them before his mother should find them, and I took a crimson smoking-coat that might help some poor person and hid it down at the bottom of my trunk to take home. Just for fun I did that ghoulish thing, I robbed the dead! Then I took up my banjo and played jig tunes, because I really wanted to cry for the misery of any young person having to be dead.

My banjo was a great comfort to me those days, for it always seemed to understand my Billy Dana moods. You see, my banjo was a reckless thing itself, and, having had a story of its own, appreciated the plot in other people's lives. And when I play my banjo I think I understand things too. You see, my banjo was a present to me when I was a little girl, sixteen years old—ten years ago. I was a silly, sick little thing, and I was spending the winter in Arizona. And there was

a man there whom I cared for quickly and picturesquely, as one does at sixteen. And I never saw him but once, and he was—drunk,—rollickingly, recklessly, dare-devil drunk,—and he sat on the shaded porch of an Arizona tavern with a banjo in his hand, playing his soul and all his future away to a greedy, infatuated, hatefully beautiful, sickeningly shoddy half-breed woman. And the strident music was like all the imps of hell let loose, and the man's face was crowded and jostled with all the badness and all the goodness you had ever dreamed of. And I was young and wild and hysterical, and I thought I saw a soul about to be damned, and I ran over to him, stumbling on my riding-habit, and stamped my foot at him, and cried great, sixteen-year-old tears. "Oh, don't be such a fool, Boy," I gasped,—imagine my saying "Boy" to him,—and he jumped up and threw his banjo on the ground, and, grabbing his sombrero, made me a mocking, low bow that sent the color flaming to my face, and I ran back crying into the house and up to my room. But the next morning when our party started away the proprietor handed me a banjo, "with the compliments of Monsieur Black Sheep."

I laughed and I cried and I felt very ashamed, and the party jollied me unmercifully and my mother scolded me roundly—but I kept the banjo. And I think the banjo likes me, and would do anything I asked it to, but the fact remains that my banjo-playing has brought me several experiences that would startle my mother.

But that is neither here nor there. What really matters is that the banjo helped me very much at Mrs. Dana's house party, for not sleeping very well at night made me rather mooney through the daytime, so that I spent a good deal of time in my room, dodging the ingénue and the Bishop's wife. The evenings were jolly enough, but I am afraid that, on the whole, I was a worthless guest, except for my banjo-playing. Why, I couldn't get up the faintest interest in any of the young men, and the Bishop bored me horribly with his unflagging solicitude about my immortal soul—and my more fleeting charms.

We were invited for a week, and on the fifth evening, because we had proved ourselves such pleasant people, Mr. Dana actually invited us up into his library for our after-dinner coffee and cigars. It was the interesting, conservative room of a marriage-tamed man. No wild oats could have flourished in the dustless, immaculate atmosphere of that sanctum. So purged, so chaste, so altogether cultured was the whole effect that I could easily imagine how Billy Dana must have gloated over the chaotic glories of his own apartment.

While I was in one corner looking at some very valuable and uninteresting foreign photographs the Bishop joined me with a small album in his hand. "Here is a picture of that Billy Dana," he whispered, and thrust the little book at me. I snatched at the open page

with ill-concealed eagerness. A picture of Billy Dana?—Good Lord, it was the Arizona man!

I assure you I did not sleep very much that night. Life and death and the absurdly awful marvels of coincidence appalled me. The virile, living sensuousness of the room rose up and mocked me, and the evasive memory of cigarette smoke permeated everything like the ghost of a ghost. I opened my eyes to the rousing crimson ruin of a man's room, and I closed them to the searing vision of an impudent, dark, roistering face, distorted at last into a grim attempt at complacent death. And I lay and cried as only the young *living* can cry for the young *dead*. And my banjo lay beside me, with its heartstrings torn and twisted and snarled like cotton thread.

I was a wreck in the morning, and stayed in bed in my best pink kimona, while all the house-party people went to the dog-show. Mrs. Dana was kindness itself before she left, and the Bishop was distressed to hear of my illness and wanted to come up and have prayers with me,—he thought it would be a comfort to me,—but I wouldn't let him, for I had a sneaking, hysterical fear that he would pray with his eyes open. I just wanted to be alone to jolly myself into a good-humor and mend my poor blasted banjo, for I had, temporarily at least, cried away my sorrow, and life seemed suddenly fresh and pungent again, like a quick-drawn breath on peppermint or ether.

So I was having a beautiful time all by myself, sitting up in bed with no worse fear than of the Bishop's return, and I had just succeeded in petting my banjo into tune when I heard an awful commotion downstairs in the hall. Someone screamed, and someone fell down, and a door slammed, and a big, gruff voice called out, "*Who said I was dead?*" Then came a lot of hurrying footsteps and voices and confusion, and then up the stairs, three steps at a time, rushed somebody singing and laughing and shouting like a mad man. My door flew wide open, and there on the threshold stood the *Arizona man*!

When he saw me his face went perfectly gray, and he reeled up against the door and gasped for breath. Then he burst out laughing like a crazy buccaneer.

"Of all the fools in Christendom!" he cried. "I have been searching for you in the uttermost corners of the world—and here you are in my own four-poster bed!"

WEAPONS

MERIBAH PHILBRICK REED

THIS fine-chased blade a Roman soldier bore;
 Here is the silver quoit he pitched at play;
 This sword within a gold-encrusted sheath,
 Hiding a golden dagger underneath,
 Wrought hara-kiri on some traitor. Nay,

Not water rust, that stain from tip to end.

Yon Malay kris with acid-eaten edge,
 The Indian knife, these cruel bits of steel
 Shaped crescent-wise, made wounds which did not heal—
 Made gaping wounds which spake a foe's fierce pledge.

Here's a stiletto with Cellini's mark,—

A woman's weapon, sharp as woman's tongue;
 Her name in rubies in the handle set,—
 With this some Grande Signora paid a debt—
 Deeper than words the pretty plaything stung.

. Best of all, I like

My Praying Sword,—brought over placid seas,
 Red-coral wreathed, gem-strewn with shining isles,
 From that far country of Eternal Smiles
 And Endless Woes. Upon brown, patient knees

The Slayer crouched, with elbows on the hilt,—

A serpent coiled,—before the god of Fate,
 Imploring strength and opportunity
 To hurl to licking flame the enemy
 Who came one night, and left him desolate.

As in a mirror, vision-worn and dim,

The Image shifts. With hungry palms upbent
 And paynim chant he begs the sacrifice.
 A custom haunts me known 'neath colder skies—
 Grace before Meat that exhortation meant.

THE MAN IN THE TOWER

By Francis Howard Williams

Author of "The Flute Player and Other Poems," "Abnan," etc.



"WHERE'S Number 12? She's always loafin' and gittin' tangled up with the Glenside accommodation or the Buffalo express."

The man in the signal tower looked through the north window at a clear track bearing straight away for two miles. Then he turned and glanced at the white light a mile to the southeast on the tower at Fern Rock.

His station was at a curve where the track made a letter U upon the green faces of the farms.

"Durned ef it don't seem ter me thet Bickford gits behind schedule a puppose to, amuse hisself. Oh, here he comes!"

The man in the tower had been showing white for ten minutes and was anxious to get rid of Number 12 freight ahead of the express, which was due at eleven-fifty-seven P.M. and didn't like to be held. Number 12 came wheezing up the grade under a curtain of bituminous smoke which soiled the sky and hung like a draggled skirt across the stars. She saw the white signal and labored past with her eighth of a mile of rumbling empties. The watcher waited till the square caboose was abreast his perch, then turned his lever to the red. The glow fell up the track for fifty yards; beyond the rails glittered like silver ribbons in the moon-light.

"I'll give her five minutes to the sidin'." He glanced towards Fern Rock; a white light still. He waited twenty seconds; the tower at Fern Rock showed red; the freight had got there, and the watcher turned his lever to the green.

"I can give the Buffalo a go-ahead-careful, anyway," he muttered.

A vagrant wind loitered across the meadow and touched the tower coldly; the loose sashes answered with a lonely rattle. The grunting of the freight died in distance and the silence became like a living thing with a heart that beat inaudibly; and the man in the tower, waiting, felt a pulse in his ears,—the whirr of crickets and the chromatic scale of the katydids. And he looked towards Fern Rock for a change to green, but it didn't come. Another minute; Fern Rock stayed red; something was wrong; the caboose had jumped the track, like enough; it's a bad habit of cabooses. From far up the track a whistle:

One long, then two short notes, faint and clear.

"Jest the usual luck," snarled the man in the tower. "The Buffalo's on time, and I've got to hold her up."

He gave the lever a quick jerk to red, but even in the moment the narrow stairs echoed the confusion of heavy footsteps. The man in the tower lunged obliquely, groping with an impotent hand to the spot between his eyes where the swift pain was, and through his bruised lids he felt the questioning light of one cold star looking through the north window. Then there was the sound of many waters, the bursting of myriads of little bubbles in some tide which rolled far up a distant, never-ending beach, and amid the drowse of it a summoning call:

One long, then two short notes, full and near.

The man in the tower knew that his lips were fashioning the words "The Buffalo!" and that hurried voices were whispering in the dark. An arm reached across his prostrate form, throwing the signal to white; he heard the lever click malignantly as it slipped past the ratchets. He tried to rise, but met a red flare and a rending sound that seemed within his brain. Again the narrow stairs echoed confusion, and the cold star, looking through the north window, saw its face reflected in a scarlet pool upon the floor.

Supreme moments sometimes turn men into gods. The man in the tower faced a supreme moment and became divine. He pressed back the hot stream of life flowing out between his fingers, and flung himself headlong against the iron mechanism. The power that for one instant held death at bay was the indomitable immortal spirit; the thing which fell across the lever was but dead flesh obedient to the law of gravity; but the law erred not: the tower light changed to red.

The cold star, still gazing with serene compassion, saw the deed, and the whirr of the crickets was punctured with sudden sword-points of sound stabbing the dark a hundred yards up the track:

Three short shrieks, charged with fear.

That night the Buffalo express got in two hours late. The passengers grumbled a little and most of them were late at breakfast the next morning.

Over their rolls and coffee they glanced at an item in the morning papers reporting the murder of a signalman (name not ascertained) by unknown parties, supposed to be train-wreckers.

The readers wondered at the depravity of the human heart,—then turned their newspapers to get at the stock quotations.

LOW-LIE-DOWN

BY MADISON CAWEIN

JOHN-A-DREAMS and Harum-Scarum
Came a-riding through the town ;
At the Sign o' the Jug and Jorum
There they met with Low-lie-down.

Brave in shoes of Romany leather,
Bodice blue and gypsy gown,
And a cap of fur and feather,
In the inn sat Low-lie-down.

Harum-Scarum kissed her lightly,
Smiled into her eyes of brown,
Clasped her waist and held her tightly,
Saying, "Love me, Low-lie-down."

Then with many an oath and swagger,
As a man of great renown,
On the board he clapped his dagger,
Called for drink and sat him down.

So a while they laughed together ;
Then he rose, and with a frown
Sighed, "While still 'tis pleasant weather
I must leave thee, Low-lie-down."

So away rode Harum-Scarum,
Singing rode he from the town ;
At the Sign o' the Jug and Jorum
Weeping lingered Low-lie-down.

Then this John-a-dreams, in tatters,
In his pocket ne'er a crown,
Touched her, saying, "Wench, what matters?
Dry your eyes and, come, sit down."

"Here's my hand : we'll roam together
Far away from thorp and town.
Here's my heart for any weather,
And my dreams too, Low-lie-down.

"Some men call me dreamer, poet ;
Some men call me fool and clown ;
What I am but you shall know it—
Only you, sweet Low-lie-down."

AVOWALS

BEING THE THIRD OF A NEW SERIES OF "CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN"

By *George Moore*

Author of "The Untilled Field," "Evelyn Innes," etc.

ONE morning as I sat thinking of Turgenieff my servant entered to say that a foreign gentleman wished to see me. She could not pronounce his name, she could only tell me that it ended in "of." "A Russian, no doubt," I said; "show him in." And while my visitor was taking off his hat and coat in the anteroom I wondered if he might be one who had known Turgenieff, and tremulous with expectation I invited him to pronounce the syllables that preceded the "of," the "off" that had caught my servant's ear. My visitor's name was perfectly well known to me; I knew him to be one of Tolstoy's critics, one of Turgenieff's translators, and he had come to tell me that he was collecting answers to Tolstoy's latest declarations regarding art, and the objects of art. This was a disappointment. I had been looking forward to talking about Turgenieff. But the Russian had come for my opinions, and here I was in a dilemma—on one side there was the unpleasantness of discussing a book which put aside Beethoven and Wagner as inferior writers, preferring the sonatas that Mozart wrote in his teens to their greatest works, and some of Charles Dickens's "Christmas Carols" to Shakespeare and Ibsen; on the other side there was my wish to please my visitor, and at the back of my mind a thought that if I told him what he wanted to hear he would probably recompense me by talking about Turgenieff later on. So I tried to discuss "What is Art?" but after a little while anger got the better of me, and naturally wishing to exhibit all my intelligence before my Russian interviewer, I laid my difficulty before him, saying that the subject was too disagreeable a one for me to discuss, and begged to be allowed to talk about Tolstoy's novels instead. He consented, and I rattled on in first-rate reviewing style about "War and Peace," until the feeling broke over me that I was saying little he had not heard before. It seemed essential to say something new about Tolstoy; there was no excuse for the rigmarole I was indulging in, and the temptation to tell my secret mind overcame me. "I have ideas about Tolstoy, but

I am afraid they will shock you," I said, and immediately my visitor began to show a keener interest in the conversation. He said he would like to hear my secret mind, and to help the conversation he put a question.

"Now, what is the first thing that strikes you in Tolstoy?"

"The great psychologist that the world admires seems to me a somewhat mythical person, and what strikes me in Tolstoy are his eyes—those miraculous eyes that have seen more of the visible world than eyes ever saw before. Gautier boasted that the invisible world was visible to him, but did he see as clearly as Tolstoy? or, to be more precise, did he see as much as Tolstoy? Seeing, like hearing, is only a question of comparison. There are music conductors, not necessarily the greatest conductors, who hear the whole orchestra together and in detail, who can pick out the faintest fault—Colonne, for instance (Berlioz, always interested in his idea, used to pass over mistakes, and when the musicians played jokes upon him he could not tell who were the delinquents). As Colonne hears Tolstoy sees—he sees more than Gautier, more than Maupassant, more, even, than Hugo. Maupassant's vision is comparable to the vision of—shall we say Terburg? Whereas Tolstoy's vision can be compared to nothing but the vision of Jan Van Eyck. His vision is as intense and as complete, though I should be sorry to say that he sees as beautifully."

At this point I paused, and my visitor said:

"Pray, go on; what you're saying interests me very much. Turgenieff said the same, and I'm waiting to see if you will conclude as he did."

"Now you embarrass me. For whatever I say, if I don't conclude as he did I shall be proved an ass out of my own mouth." My visitor pressed me to continue, and I said: "Tolstoy knows all that is passing, all that is ephemeral within and without. He can tell you the feelings of a young man as he looks at a young girl and desires her as truly as he will tell you the changes that the season brings into the landscape, but he never had any clear conception of a human soul as a distinct entity—he knows little of the soul as a being complete in itself. His knowledge of the soul is relative and episodic; he tries to arrive at the soul from without. I'm afraid I cannot express myself better at this moment, but my meaning, I'm sure, is clear; his characters are, therefore, without organic construction. But I'm most anxious to hear what Turgenieff said."

"He said the very same."

"Did he! Tell me again that he said the same. I should love to hear you say it again." And my visitor assured me that Turgenieff had said the same. "But how much more beautifully he must have said it. After all, it is the idea that counts; tell me again that he

said the very same—the very, very same. Fill my cup of bliss. My interviewer poured out another cup of bliss, and having drunk it and smacked my lips many times, I continued,—no doubt I continued, but I have told all I remember of our conversation.

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In speaking of "Anna Karenina" W. D. Howells said, "This is not like life, it is life." And this is true. "Anna Karenina" is the moment of living, the amusement and the grief of the moment, and "War and Peace" is the same; it is not like life, it is life. While we are reading these novels the very dust of the road is upon us. It is the whole theme of bodily life and little else; these books make other books seem shadowy and thin; they are as intense and as vivid as life, and we remember them as we remember life, fondly. They are long,—nearly as long as life,—but their length does not help them. "A House of Gentle Folk" is no more than a few chapters of "War and Peace," and it is not as vivid nor is it as intense, but it is more rememberable. We spent but a little while with Liza and Lavrelsky, and the book seemed to us only a charming story, but the sorrows of Liza and Lavrelsky have become part of our consciousness, their joys and sufferings being part of the sufferings and joys that man has endured and must endure forever.

Tolstoy and Turgenieff were contemporaries, and though they differed as much as human beings may differ, there are some points of resemblance; in neither was there any progression; as they are in the beginning, so they are in the end. Turgenieff began by writing the most beautiful tales in the world, and he went on writing beautifully and wisely. I know nothing in Turgenieff that is not beautiful, and only one thing the wisdom of which may be questioned. We may question the wisdom of the letter he wrote on his death-bed to Tolstoy. It is as perfect as anything he ever wrote, and for a long time I could not read it without bursting into tears; so, perhaps, it is as well that I cannot lay my hand upon it now. It consists of only five or six lines. He says he is lying very ill, and as for getting better, it is not to be thought of. He tells Tolstoy how he is honored by the fact that he was his contemporary, and he begs of Tolstoy to return to art, that mysterious gift which has come to him he knows not whence nor how. He tells him that he would die easier if he were sure that Tolstoy would put controversy by. The letter ends with a few words to the effect that he is too weak to write any more, and it is extraordinary how well his dying words make us feel the helplessness of a dying man. The letter is as beautiful as anything he ever wrote, but he should have known that Tolstoy could not change himself.

In my last article I spoke of Turgenieff as having come out of the East telling tales. Now there is little of the tale-teller in Tolstoy. Whereas Turgenieff's art came out of the eternal East, Tolstoy's came out of the ephemeral West. He took "Vanity Fair" as his model, he adopted the form of "Vanity Fair," the division of a family into four groups, and "Anna Karenina" is a sort of "Vanity Fair" written with moral ideas substituted for social vanities.

With this rapid criticism I will pass on to the greater book, "War and Peace." Here again we have the same form, a family divided into different groups, and the life histories of each are told. In the fourth volume Tolstoy draws the threads together, and he does this miraculously well. The size of the book, the number of characters, and the multiplicity of incidents have suggested to all critics the great canvases of Tintoretto and Veronese, and Tolstoy's execution is as easy and as sure as theirs. But the Venetians were tranquil pagans, content with the kingdom of the earth, whereas Tolstoy is the reincarnation of Luther as Luther was a reincarnation of Paul; and when Tolstoy is not describing external things with a zeal and patience equal to that of Van Eyck he is full of alarm at the wickedness of the world, and it is difficult to give any idea of the extent to which Tolstoy mixes up the changing aspects of things that the eye perceives with the unchanging affections that the heart ponders. As Wagner seems to have attached the same importance to the fitting horses in the flies as to the music in the orchestra, so does Tolstoy seem to attach the same importance to the number of freckles on the man's nose as he does to the man's love of his children. In writing "War and Peace" he seems to have set out with no more subtle artistic intention than a desire to describe the whole of life. The first two volumes contain descriptions of hunting, shooting, sledging, card parties, balls, duels! and I laid aside the book to wonder. "Flaubert," I said to myself, "represented the external world in its many and ever-changing aspects, for he wished us to see the external world flowing like water before our eyes as Brahma sees it. But I can detect no such subtle intention in this book."

I did not take up "War and Peace" again for a year or more, and the reason of my taking it up was that I had read in a newspaper a mention of how Prince André lay on a battle-field looking at the stars, and in seeking the scene out I read the whole of the third volume, marvelling greatly at the ceaseless invention with which Tolstoy takes Pierre from one regiment to another, from tent to tent, showing us what is happening at every part of the immense battle, explaining the different plans of the Russian generals. He explains Napoleon's plan for the battle with an insight that makes us ask ourselves if he were

not as great a military tactician as Napoleon. But it was not until Pierre is taken prisoner, until he is forced to follow the French army from Moscow, and meets a philosopher-peasant on the way who has a little pink puppy (the puppy generally runs on three legs) that I began to understand that the hero of the book is Destiny. It was then that I began to understand that everyone in the book set out to do something, and that everyone did do something, but that no one did what he had set out to do, not even Napoleon, and I marvelled greatly how Tolstoy could have described all the things he described in the first volumes without once indicating the idea that must have been at the back of his mind all the time. In the fourth volume Natasha abandons her sensuous, frivolous girlhood and becomes extraordinarily interested in her babies, even in their disgusting little ailments; and we assist in the sinking into old age of the generation we knew in the first volume, and we watch the young people whom we knew in the first volume sinking into middle age. While reading and for some time after I thought I had never read anything more poignant than the scenes in which Natasha's mother talks only of things of twenty years ago. I marvel greatly at her son; it is only in the fourth volume that Tolstoy allows us to know that he is a mere commonplace man who married an ugly princess. Now he is interested in farming, and the last time we see him he is standing on a balcony watching the small rain that the thirsting oats are drinking up greedily. Pierre too has grown older, and he still goes up to St. Petersburg to attend spiritualistic séances, but now he is only faintly interested in spiritual things, and he knows that his life will know no further change.

The end of the book is so great that we forgive the description of the freckles on the left side of the footman's nose, a footman who once brought in a samovar; we forgive the coats that cannot be buttoned and the waistcoats that overlap; we forgive even the description of the Rolstoffs removing their furniture from Moscow after the battle; the scene in which Natasha and her mother count the napkins and tablecloths and dusters—the description occupies several pages, and it would be difficult to say in what it differs from an auctioneer's catalogue. We forgive and wonder that if we were to reread the first and second volumes the knowledge of the end would enable us to reread the hunting scenes, and the sledging scenes, and the gambling scenes. We wonder, but we do not turn to the book again. Notwithstanding our æsthetic curiosity, we shrink from the task of rereading the first and second volumes; to reread them would be like reliving some part of our lives over again. Now why did Tolstoy describe so many things? He derived his literary composition from the English novel, but the English novel is free from realistic description. Did he get his realistic descriptions from the French novel? Are his novels

a stew of "Vanity Fair" and "Madame Bovary," with a little remorse of conscience from Edgar Poe?

French realism proceeds from "Madame Bovary." "Madame Bovary" was published in '57. "War and Peace" was published in '60. And three years would not be sufficient for the composition of "War and Peace." Tolstoy must have begun it long before the publication of "Madame Bovary." But Flaubert's realistic description rests upon a philosophical basis. If you would understand "Madame Bovary's" soul, the Normandy village and landscape must be described in its every detail. The novelist's business is like the entomologist's, not only the insect, but the plant it lives upon must be described. Well, Tolstoy began as a materialist; the writings of Darwin and Spencer interested him as they interested Flaubert; maybe Tolstoy's realism was the spirit of the age, the result of the study of natural sciences. This may be a true explanation of Tolstoy's realism, but there is another explanation and a more interesting one, that Tolstoy's realism is the realism of a primitive people; comparable to the realism of the painters of the fifteenth century, the realism of children who stop at the wayside to tease a beetle, to investigate every bush. It pleases us to see something of the primitive painter in Tolstoy—in a word, to detect an element of "folk" in his elaborate compositions.

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Literature has been divided into the Romantic and Classical schools; we all agree that certain writers are classical whilst others are romantic, but so far as I know no one has ever been able to say what is classical and what is romantic, and I confess that I have lived until quite lately in the same ignorance as the critics that preceded me. But one day it was suddenly borne in upon me that if we were to substitute the words "folk" and "culture" for the words "romantic" and "classical" we should understand how art begins in the irresponsible imaginations of the people, how it wells up in the imaginations of the people like a spring in a mountain waste, and how the course of every artistic movement may be compared to that of a mountain spring. The spring rises amid rocks, it trickles and forms a rivulet, it swells into a stream, and after many wanderings, perhaps after a brief sojourn in artificial ponds and basins, it returns to the earth whence it came. A few examples will make my meaning clear. Homer is art emerging out of folk, whilst from Sophocles the element of folk has almost disappeared. Shakespeare is art emerging out of folk. The writing is always culture, the substance is very often folk, and we actually assist at the shearing away of the folk tale from the tragedy of "Hamlet." We may consider "Hamlet" as culture in substance, in expression, but "As You Like It" is purely folk in substance; the

verbal expression is culture as much as the verbal expression of the tragedy is culture, but the various Dukes, the forest meetings, are folk.

And as it is with literature, so it is with painting. Pinturicchio, who preceded Raphael, is the type of the folk painter. He is a tale-teller telling tales among people emerging from the religious gloom of the middle ages, tales of saints and miracles, quaint little saints playing hand organs or viols, or we find him rambling among religious processions in narrow Gothic streets, always delightfully spontaneous and always heedless of proportions or anatomies: he is the pavement artist of the Renaissance and stands on the threshold of culture. But Botticelli represents culture in its first, and Raphael in its last stage.

Architecture began, I suppose, with the wigwam. But we need not go so far back. The Irish romanesque chapels are examples of pure folk architecture, and the Gothic cathedrals—Chartres, for instance—combine folk and culture. The architecture is culture, the sculpture on the walls is folk. Folk-music is merely eight-bar melodies, and maybe the element of folk disappears quicker from music than from sculpture or painting, and whether Palestrina advanced as far towards culture as Botticelli or stands nearer to Perugino I will leave to another critic to decide—the nearer purpose of this article is to decide whether we should attribute Tolstoy's realism to French influence or if we should regard it as a folk inheritance. Well, its uncouthness inclines us to attribute it to folk, and folk it may well be, for Tolstoy is a Tartar. Or he may have picked his realism out of a book, for Tolstoy is a pedagogue. His realism came to him in his youth, and he has been interested in so many things that he never had time to consider how much he should describe or how little. It is necessary to remember that Tolstoy is not one man, but many men, and the many souls that inhabit his soul are an ill-assorted crew. The man of genius we will put first, and after the man of genius comes the pedagogue and the Tartar; the Tartar is followed by the early Christian hermit; and room must be found for an artist, half primitive, half decadent. In speaking of a painter we speak of quality, and if Tolstoy were a painter, we should say that his painting is without quality, without that charm which everyone perceives and desires in silk or satin, but which few perceive in oil painting, yet it is as necessary in oil painting as it is in a gown, and I sympathize with the dressmaker's view that it would be well to know the quality of the silk before we decide on the design of the gown. We have praised the design of Tolstoy's novels; the design of "War and Peace" may be compared on account of the splendor of its invention to Tintoretto and Veronese, but it has no share in their beauty of color and refined execution. Tolstoy's drawing-rooms are very modern

—they are very Royal Academy. They are lower in tone than Mr. Sargent's, but they are equally pungent and vivacious. The candelabras and the Aubusson carpets are executed as easily, and there is a profusion of women in tight dresses and open-work stockings and glittering shoes.

One day I went to order something at the grocer's, and the grocer asked me if I had seen the great social picture at the Academy. "Mr. Sargent's great picture, which the King admires. The three young ladies are sitting on an ottoman, and they wear tight silk dresses which allow you to appreciate their figures, and their fingers are spread out over the cushions, and they are ready to spring up at any moment to receive visitors. There is a piece of tapestry behind the ladies which I hear cost three thousand pounds at Christie's; and there are six footmen in the hall always waiting to show up the visitors, so they say. And the young ladies sit with their lips parted, all expectant, and they are so real that you can almost hear them saying, 'How do you do, dear? On Tuesday, dear, on Tuesday.' I'm sure they drink champagne at every meal, sir."

I do not think any better description of Mr. Sargent's portrait groups has yet appeared, and so, perhaps, my readers will forgive me for chronicling my grocer's art criticism. But they must not confuse Tolstoy with Mr. Sargent; one is a man of genius, and his drawing-rooms are not quite so vulgar. His landscapes are dry and hard, a dirty drab, and they remind one of Bastien-Lepage. The summer night in "Anna Karenina" is copied from nature; and it is as well copied as Bastien-Lepage could copy it. I am thinking now of the summer night when Levine lies on the hay after his day's work seeing the summer night drawn and withdrawn like a faint veil across the summer sky. But his summer night is not comparable to Turgenieff's summer nights. I remember some people returning, I think, from a picnic, and their carriage passes under the branches of some trees and the odorous meadows extend on either side. I think they pass by some rustling wheat. No fact do I remember, everything has passed from me but the emotion—a sense of love and tenderness mixing with the calm, benign night. I remember other nights in Turgenieff,—the night at Naples when he hears a woman singing,—but this article is about Tolstoy and not about Turgenieff.

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Tolstoy's soul is a populous soul; it is filled with a strange company, some few of which have been already mentioned. One of the minor characters I said was an artist,—a half-primitive, half-decadent artist,—and there I left my idea. I was thinking at that moment of Tolstoy's uncouth execution; the name that came up in my mind was Caracci's—a Caracci of the Steppes. A Caracci in which we catch

glimpses here and there of Bellini. Glimpses of Bellini through Caracci! Can anything be more incongruous? Nothing. But can anything be more incongruous than Tolstoy? his personal life? his doctrines and his art? Place must be found among the strange company that inhabit his soul for another important minor figure—a sophist. My readers will gibe a little; they will accept the pedagogue and the hermit and the artist easily, but the sophist startles and offends them, for Tolstoy has come to seem to them the type of a man that will sacrifice all for truth. It is true that he has been trying all his life to be sincere, he has screamed out his soul from the housetops; but the sophist is ever by him, and amid the screams of the preacher we hear the shrilling of the sophist. Nearly all my similies have been drawn from the art of painting; music has been well-nigh forgotten. It occurs to me that there is a great deal of cornet playing in the Tolstoy orchestra; trumpets are never sufficient for him; and unexpectedly we hear the blatant instrument; and the cornet player is the sophist. His Napoleonic solo in "War and Peace" is a very strident performance, and we shall examine it and some other pieces of the same kind in our next article.



THE INVITATION

BY MARIE VAN VORST

UNDER my window, oh blue-winged swallow,
 Build you your nest where the eaves hang low;
 Spring is here, and the Summer will follow,
 With June's mild warmth, and the July glow.

Here you may rest you in peace, and breed you
 A feathered flock who will fly afar—
 Ships to the clouds, when you circling speed you
 Down to the South, where the warm days are.

Come,—for my window is high and lonely,—
 Woo your mate 'neath the sheltering eaves;
 None shall whisper your secret, only
 The clambering vine, with its screening leaves.

Swallow, swallow, why seek you for other
 Nook? Here build where you've sung and wooed;
 Blue-winged lover,—soft, feathered mother,—
 Build you your home for your cherished brood.

AT THE CROWN AND SCEPTRE

By Ralph Henry Barbour

Author of "The Land of Joy," etc.



FROM THE JOURNAL OF SIR MICHAEL CURRIE, OF BALLY-NA-FAG.

T WAS a devil of a night, black as a pocket, with a bit of a wind whipping the leaves along the road until they rustled and whispered and sent my hand to my sword-hilt a dozen times between the coach and the park gate. Behind me the twinkling lights of Bath came through the trees as much as to say, "Sure, we're watchin' you, Mike Currie; be off now about your business!" Half way, belike, up the drive towards the Hall I heard the stamping of one of the horses and the low voice of Pat speaking him quiet. Then came the laurel walk and——

"Whis-s-st!" says I softly.

"Is it you, dear?" asks a bit of a voice, trembling like a bird's.

"Who else would it be?" I whispers. "Give me hold of the soft hand of you," says I, "and keep your pretty mouth closed till I'm through with it."

It was that dark I could see nothing but the dim sky overhead and the trees where they stood against it. But I found Clementa's hand and I took her in my arms, mighty gently, you understand, for fear of alarming her. She trembled a bit, but I'd not be blaming her for that, for, sure, 'tis a frightsome thing to steal out of a fine, warm bed at two of the morning and wait in the rustling dark to be run away with. When I'd found the dear lips of her and kissed them, I gathered the cloak about her.

"The coach is at the gate, darling," I whispers. "Walk easy on your little feet, for, faith, it's not me that'll be wanting to see Sir William the night."

I led the way down the road, one hand on the edge of her cloak to guide her, and t'other on my sword. Pat was waiting at the gate. Beyond him, drawn under the big trees at the side of the road, was the coach, the lights hidden.

"Is all well?" whispers Pat hoarsely.

"Up on the box, you rascal," says I, "and drive like the devil! Pull up for nothing till you see the lights of the Crown and Sceptre between their ears!"

With that I helps Clementa into the coach, jumps in after her, and claps to the door. "All right!" I cries.

Faith, the very devil of a ride it was! There wasn't a rock for fourteen miles that we didn't ride over. The coach lurched this way and that way, and banged and thumped and jumped and played tattoo with the ground. And the horses were galloping like mad, with Pat, on the box, singing "Barney Malone" and swearing at the top of his voice. Sure, there in the coach not a word could I say save I put my mouth to Clementa's ear; and when I tried that, *bump!* would go the coach over a rock and *bang!* would go the two heads of us. So I took her in my arms and braced my feet, and like that, with just a squeeze and a kiss now and then, we rode to the Crown and Sceptre at Illwich. But that's a lie, for three miles from there Billy, riding alongside, beat a rat-a-tat on the window.

"What's wanting?" I shouted, sticking my head out.

"There's a coach at our heels, sir!"

"A coach! You're drunk, you rascal!"

"Look for yesel', sir; you can see the lights on the hill." And, sure enough, there they were, two yellow devils of lanterns bobbing and jumping like will-o'-the-wisps gone mad half a mile, belike, behind us.

"Tell Pat to drive faster," I calls.

Then I put my head back and draws Clementa's ear to me.

"Sir William's after us, darling," says I. "Bad 'cess to the old devil," says I. "If he catches us this side of the Crown and Sceptre," I says, "he'll be sorry for it!"

"You'd not kill him?" she asks in a queer sort of a voice.

"Devil a bit," I says; "I'll just run my skewer between his ribs, and no harm done," I says.

With that she was silent a bit, and I put my head out of the window again. The lights were nearer. I shouted to Pat,—

"Lash 'em, you fool, lash 'em!"

Then I heard the *whish-s-sh* of the big whip, and my head hit the side of the window with a thump that brought stars into the sky. On and on came the lights, nearer and nearer. "Sure," I rauttered, "'tis wings his horses have."

At that I felt a hand tugging at my arm, and I turned, groping for Clementa.

"He mustn't catch us," she cries, close to my ear.

"Sure, and that's the truth!" I cries back.

"Maybe—maybe 'twould be better if we went back," says she, her voice very fearful.

"Tare and 'ounds!" I cries. "Go back, is it? Devil a step, my darling!"

"Then—then, if you stopped the coach, I could get out and hide in the trees," she cries.

"Faith, what's frightening you, sweetheart?" says I. "If your father catches up with us, why, 'tis not you nor me that'll come to harm, I'm thinking. Bad 'cess to him for——"

"My father?" she asked, strange-like, shouting above the rattle and bang of the carriage.

"Your father," says I.

"My *father!*" she says again.

"Hush, hush," I says, patting her hand. "'Tis all right, my darling; you'll feel better forby you get a sip o' something hot at the inn."

But I felt the plump shoulders of her heaving under her cloak.

"There, there," I shouts tenderly, "don't be crying, darling. Sure, you wrench the heart of me with your tears."

"I'm—I'm n-not cr-crying!" she answers.

"True for you," I says.

And at that down comes the coach in a ditch with the noise of an earthquake. When I found Clementa and pulled her out, there were the lights of the inn scarce a stone's throw away, and there were the lights of the other coach across the road. Pat, swearing terrible, was trying to hold the horses, while Billy, the knave, was tearing away towards London as though Satan himself was at his horse's heels. Just as I crawled out with Clementa the door of the other coach swung open with a *bang!* and out jumped a figure, dim in the light of the lamps. Snatching my arm from Clementa's grasp I out with my sword and leaped into the middle of the road.

"A fine morning, Sir William," I says, mighty polite.

"Is it you, Mike?" asks the figure, and the voice puzzles me a deal, for 'twas not Sir William's at all.

"Sir Michael Currie, at your service," says I, holding up my guard, but stepping quietly towards him to get a glimpse of his face.

"Put up your sticker," says he, laughing. "Sure, don't you know me?"

"I'm not certain," says I. "You're not Sir William Crackthorp, that's plain. Whoever you are," says I, "come into the light."

"I'll do it," says he; and with that he walks forward towards the lanterns, when, with a yell, across the road runs Clementa.

"Roderick!" she cries, "Roderick!" And she throws herself into his arms.

"New, what the devil's this?" says I. "Is it Rody Moore that you are?"

"The same," he says, shouting with laughter.

"Then what are you doing with your arms around the lady that is to do me the honor of becoming my wife?" asks I.

"Sure, there's been a bit of a mistake," says he. "Come, look." I went up to him, and the woman in his arms turned her face into the light. Saints of Heaven! 'Twas Clementa's mother!

"W-what!" I gasps, falling against the wheel in amazement. "Rody, for Heaven's sake, man, what means it?"

"Why, this," says he, disengaging the lady and speaking softly. "Lady Bertha and I love each other, as you well know, I'm thinking, and so, her curmudgeon of a husband sadly interfering with our passion, we'd arranged to go to London, d'ye see, Mike? But before I can get to her along you come with your coach and off goes my lady with you, thinking, no doubt, 'twas me. That's all," says he.

"All!" I shouts, "*all!* Why, you blundering idiot, you've spoiled everything! Why couldn't you fix on any other night? What am I to do, now that I'm fourteen miles from Bath, without my sweetheart?"

"Aisy, aisy, Mike," says Rody. "Look into the coach, lad."

I sprang forward and stuck my head into the blackness; I could see nothing for a bit; then my eyes made out a form huddled in the corner, and I heard stifled sobs.

"Clementa!" I cries. And,

"*Clementa!*" shrieks my Lady. "My daughter! Oh, the villain!"

"Michael, dear!" says a soft voice full of tears. I climbed in and banged the door behind me. Outside my Lady still protested feebly and Rody's voice, soothing like, reached me in low murmurs. Then Clementa was in my arms and I heard no more.

The door creaked and opened. Rody coughed, then put his head in.

"The horses are changed, Mike, and there's still a bit of road 'twixt here and London. Are you ready to go on?"

"Go on?" I shouts, leaping to my feet. "How the devil can I go on with my coach lying bottom up in the ditch? Sure, it's lucky the inn's at hand, for there'll be a fire there and a cup of the crayther; and God send Sir William doesn't come till I've tried that same!"

"Zounds!" cries Rody, "there's food and drink in the hamper, and where's the coach can't hold four?"

"Man!" I says, "do you mean it?"

"What else? Faith, we'll ride to London together, and——"

"But my Lady?" I whispered.

Rody chuckled.

"Sure, she'd be an unnatural mother if she interfered with her daughter's happiness. She bids me say to you, Madam,"—he bowed into the gloom,—"*that while lamenting the—ah——*"

"A rider, sir, coming down the hill!" cried a post-boy. We listened. The beating of hoofs reached us faintly, yet grew louder each instant.

"A coach?" asked Rody.

"Nay, sir, there's but the one horse there," answered the driver. I eased the sword.

"Steady, lad," whispers Rody; "if he's alone we'll just tie him hand and foot and put him in the other coach to think over his sins."

Then the form of horse and rider plunged towards us out of the darkness, the horse swung back on his haunches, and a servant cried out for Mister Roderick Moore and leaped to the road. He held a paper.

"What's this?" asks Rody.

"A message, your Honor, from Sir William." My Lady gave a gasp of dismay.

"Bring a light," cries Rody. The driver fetched the coach lantern and held it. Rody beckoned and I leaned over the paper with him. The letter was short.

"Mr. Roderick Moore, Esqr.,

"On the Road to London.

"SIR: God bless you.

"Your Grateful and Obedient Servant,

"CRACKTHORP."

Rody crushed the paper in his fist and stared silently before him with the veins big in his forehead.

"Is there any reply, your Honor?" asks the messenger.

"Reply!" roars Rody, with a mighty, full-sounding oath. "Reply?" He sent the fellow reeling against his horse with a blow in the face. "Give him that," splutters Rody.

A minute later and we were jogging towards London, Clementa and her mother in each other's arms, Rody and I forinst them. As we passed the Crown and Sceptre the light from the open door fell upon us and I caught a glimpse of Rody, his chin sunk deep and a mighty thoughtful scowl on his face.



ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

BY FRANK PRESTON SMART

I GO my way and do not care,
Though some, perforce, I must offend;
Who has no enemies can ne'er
Know what it is to have a friend.

ONE YEAR IN NAMENIA

By Judith Underwood



[NOTE.—The unfortunate settlement of Namenia, which was established on social principles greatly in advance of its time or even of the present age, was situated, as nearly as surveyors' records can place it, a few miles to the north of New Madrid, Missouri, the point at which its people went down being now covered by the inmost arm of the large bayou below Cairo. The colonists were victims of the earthquake of 1811, and no records remain of their life or philosophy save these few leaves from the wedding-book of Flavia Lamb. Half of the white satin back of the book is torn away, and the rest is yellowed and water-soaked, but the fly-leaf bears in imperishable violet ink an affectionate inscription in Latin to Flavia and her husband from the priest who married them, and the bride's own writing is the same as if it had been written yesterday, except that it is far more delicate and precise.]

1809.

RESOLUTION made by Flavia Lamb on her wedding-day, June 14, 1809:

"Since it is the fashion of all diaries that I have seen to consume much time with a bare daily record, giving no connected idea of the life described, I shall avoid this folly by remembering Cicero, whom I love. In every sentence of his I have a model for my journal. I pass through his phrases, held continually in suspense, until I reach the final verb; likewise I cannot view a human life with intelligence until all the deeds are ended. Yet I may not wait until I am dead to write my diary. I shall take the "middle way," and at the end of each year of this life about to begin I shall give a portrait of the chief events, giving its proper perspective to each, as well as I am able."

1810.

When Robert and I were married, a year ago, the Namenians crowded around us, after the custom, with wishes "ad multos annos," and we two were sure, as I suppose most brides and bridegrooms are, that we should be happy together all the years of our life. Others might avail themselves of the permission to become single when the year was ended; not we. The thought at that time was abhorrent to me.

But having never been married before, I had not counted on certain eccentricities of temperament—and no more, I suppose, had Robert. I have a way of singing a tune for my own pleasure by sounding merely the melody without giving forth the words. As the winds of an early fall compelled a close residence within our one-room cabin, this habit of mine became irritating to Robert. It had, perhaps, a whine-y sound in his ears, although before I left the world and became a Namenian I was once told I had much "darkness" in my voice. Yet Robert remarked to his wolf-dog,—so that I could hear him too,—“You would be unable to make so bad a noise as that if you tried, would you not, Ponto?”

It occurred to me that Robert was nervous. To think of a nervous Namenian, and especially one who had the forest around him, as we have, was distressing to me. It evoked, I fear, a far greater departure from tranquillity than our law permits. A manner he had of thrumming on the table where I wanted to cook annoyed me. There were other antagonisms; I forget some of them.

“We might as well end the matter,” said Robert after an aggravating encounter of idiosyncrasies one long winter evening. “It is clear that we are unsuited for each other, and it was just for such ill-matched pairs as us that the Namenian rule was intended.” I threw my arms around his neck in delight. When I had recovered my composure I gladly consented to his plan that we should allow our names in May to be placed on the list of “Conjuges Vidui,” so as to be released in June. By the law we were, of course, obliged to remain in the married state for the full year.

In the morning it was a great pleasure to awaken and remember that I was no longer tied to Robert. His face too beamed with joy. He chopped wood gayly in front of the door and piled it high, saying the while to the fireplace:

“O Cerberus,

Curst wolf! Thy fury inward
Turn and consume thyself.”

When I saw him so merry my spirits continued to rise. Those obstacles of the wilderness which had hitherto annoyed us we began to regard as jokes. We found amusements for the long winter evenings, and became so proficient at the game of Questions and Answers that Robert was once able to guess “Og, King of Bashan,” although he had no clew save the questions to which I was bound to answer “Yes” or “No.” Robert delicately refrained from speaking again of the cause of our joy, and the month of May drew silently near.

For the first time in my life the return of the violets made me sad. On one occasion after Robert had gathered me a great bunch

of them he said: "You might sing again, Flavia. I should be glad to hear you." But I had no heart for singing.

I had determined if there should have been a child that I could not let the community take charge of it, according to the Namenian law. I would keep it myself as a token that Robert once had loved me. But, alas! there was no child. Dido's state, when the gods took Æneas from her, was not more pitiful than mine. I caught myself often repeating her words:

"Oh, that a babe of mine
Should be lifted by thee as thy son; O, that a little Æneas
Should play in the court——"

The revelation came through a pie. I was preparing a feast for the last day before the proclamation. I was trying to be as gay as Robert as I cut a pretty design for the top cover of the pie. But my wits were deserting me. Heedlessly I cut on the crust, "ANTE FUGAM SUBOLES"—and Robert saw what I had done.

Then Robert looked deep into my eyes, and all at once each of us understood that the other was making believe. Robert still loved me, and I loved Robert.

"Grief is selfish," said Robert, "and I was so sad myself that I was blind to your sadness. But"—and at last he laughed without pretence—"we'll keep that pie forever."

Nevertheless, Robert and I did go to the public meeting next day. We were curious, that was all. The crier stood up and called for "Conjuges Vidui," and we looked around to see, expecting quite a number. But not one couple responded.

Robert drew a droll face and looked at me. "It is a fool who never changes his mind," he whispered.



AUTUMN

BY COL. KENTUCKY

WHEN frosty winds come whirling 'cross
The fields o' golden corn,
And whistle 'round the fodder shocks,
And ghosts go wailing lorn,
They hint o' joys a-coming, when
We'll sip the amber rye,
And take a slice o' golden sweet
From out the pumpkin pie.

THE BROTHERS IMPLACABLE

By Eleanor L. Stuart



I

A RAILWAY carriage of unusual equipment, and with its special engine, was drawn up on a siding at Tellin to await the passing of the "Petersburg to Paris" mail. The Princess Ganodkin was seated in its salon—en route for the Paris season.

"Maroc, why spend the night here?" she inquired.

Maroc appeared in a fur tunic and cotton trousers, the least of a Russian servant's inconsistencies. The arms of the family his own had always served were in golden embroidery on his coat-sleeve, half buried in fur.

"Excellency," he returned pettishly, "the piggish night-mail demands the track and declines to pull private carriages. The Princesses Ganodkin are served—with a poor dinner."

"Summon the new Princess," she said in French, drawing nearer the narrow railway table. She was as typically Russian as a three days' snowfall. Her figure was stout, her shoulders and cheekbones even higher than her ambitions; she was always in church or drinking tea. Her daily garb was in the worst fashion of English tailors, plain as a deal coffin, square and strong. Her white hair shone with skilled care and jewelled pins, diamonds glittered in her shirt-front, and gemmed necklaces were clasped outside her mannish collars. She read all languages.

Her daughter-in-law was a pretty American, evidently admiring the old lady, behind whose chair Maroc took his reverential stand. He smiled at them with the perfect nonchalance of an old retainer. The atmosphere of these august travellers was simple and affectionate.

"We are attached to the 'Vitesse du Nord' in about two hours," the elder woman said.

"After which it is less than thirty to Alexis——"

"And the hatshops," the "Mother-title" answered, with a wonderfully becoming smile.

"I see by day before yesterday's *Figaro*," her daughter-in-law began, dutifully attempting table-talk, "that the son of your old friend, —ah! how shall I pronounce him?—Borovotsky?—who was found dead in Baden, had an æolian. Late the night of his death he played the 'Rakotzky March' on it. The people in the suite heard him, and

a little black cross was found about his neck. This march and a little black cross, the paper said, was the sign, the concerted death-sentence, of the society which killed his father, 'The Brothers Implacable.' Odd, wasn't it?"

Maroc signalled silence from behind his stout mistress. She turned and caught him.

"Get me the *Figaro*," she said. Her lips were white and she drank all her wine without stopping while he brought the paper. She read rapidly, and then looked out on the sluggish Tiesen, which outruns time in that dull province. Her soup cooled before her untasted, and it was good soup. But the details of life were in abeyance, while her bitterest memory was turning in its sleep. The river sent the lingering sun a bright answer; its surface was red and gold, side by side with the iron tracks.

"The Brothers Implacable," she observed, "are the reason we have no bands in Toesk and no market crosses in Tilsit."

Maroc touched the Mother-title on the shoulder.

"Don't," he said entreatingly,—“please don't, Excellency.”

There were streams of tears on his battered Kalmuck face—little streams, vivid in the last sunrays, like the slow-moving river itself.

"My husband," Princess Ganodkin said calmly, "was a victim of the Brothers Implacable. Neither Alexis nor I wished you to know it before you came to Russia. There is no real danger, and yet thoughts of these things are disturbing to strangers. We are going to Paris now, and you might hear it in any salon apropos of Borovotsky."

Princess Alexis was horrified, and yet her pretty face was deeply sympathetic.

"That was in '70, Mother of Alexis?"

The older woman nodded.

"My son was a year old," she said.

"But now," Maroc interrupted, "the concerted signal is barred. If one play the Implacable tune, one is banished; if one 'discover, harbor, create, or borrow a black cross,' one is fined. It is not a national society, it is only a club of Tilsit."

"It grew out of the riots in the sixties. Men dragged the country owners to the market crosses and the bands played 'Rakotzky,'" the Mother-title explained.

Maroc attempted gayety as he changed the plates.

"Assassination is not hereditary," he said soothingly.

"Dear old idiot," his mistress murmured with affection.

The carriage moved on its siding, the night-mail thundered at hand, passed them, racing towards the red west; one star pricked the zenith with its point of light; one thrush sang a spring song from

his thicket; one fear lodged within their hearts,—but the women covered theirs over with the gossip of two continents.

II.

THEIR special engine left them at Gamost when the "Vitesse du Nord" called for them. Lanterns shone on a wilderness of tracks, and stunted oaks shivered in the keen breeze. Even in the dark one observed a local bleakness.

"We get yesterday's papers here," Maroc proclaimed joyfully.

The two Princesses were arranged for the night on sheeted couches, arrayed in black peignoirs and covered with soft furs. Pintsch lights glared hotly from the ceiling, and while the elder woman read the younger knitted.

"Shall I go out and buy the Paris papers?" Maroc asked.

"Don't leave us alone," Princess Alexis said quickly; "send the guard."

Someone tapping on the glass door leading to the platform frightened her to the point of pallor. Maroc opened the door but a tiny crack.

They cried out with pleasure as Prince Alexis Ganodkin entered.

"But I thought you had to be in Paris?" one cried.

"You said you must attend the Commission?" the other questioned.

He looked haggard, but evidently enjoyed their surprise. He had assumed a certain incongruous gayety, a curious contrast to his usual calm. The glaring light fell on him, a man of average height but unusual bulk. His bold and honest eyes were shaded with black brows and lashes, but his hair was soft and fair as a blond child's. His handsome mouth was marred by a thin mustache, almost white and typically Tartar. Everything about his dress expressed a man of Oriental prejudices and British pastimes. He was courteous, brave, and clever.

"I thought you might worry about me," he explained, "when you read of Borovotsky and Lemet. So night before last the younger Maroc flung my clothes into a valise and took our places in the 'Paris to Petersburg' as far as Gamost, where we knew we could catch you. We reached here at noon."

"We only got yesterday's papers here, we do not know about Lemet," the women cried together.

"Well," Alexis said doubtfully, "Lemet was struck in the back of the head at the house of Folle-Fanchette, the danseuse in his opera, you see."

"But the sign," Maroc demanded, "did he see a sign?"

Alexis looked at his wife.

"I told her about it, apropos of Borovotsky," his mother said calmly.

"Oh!" Alexis threw aside his gayety and became circumstantial and grave. "Lemet heard someone whistling 'Rakotzky' under the window. You see, he has our association with the tune. He went to the window and saw a cross of black shadow in the street. Two cabs caused it by standing under street-lamps. That ghastly coincidence is all he remembers. He is in our hotel; they brought him there, and the doctors say he will recover—probably."

"I think it is undoubtedly the Brothers again," the Mother-title exclaimed sadly.

"I have a detective with me," Alexis continued,—“Caron, the best in Paris, I hear. They think that as I also am a son of one of the three men who lost their lives in trying to break up Nihilism I may be attacked. So this Caron goes about with me. Poor Lemet! think, his first opera to be produced and he knocked up anonymously. The ballet-master is a Nihilist and was arrested on suspicion, but he proved an alibi and was discharged. His work is invaluable to the opera. I'm delighted he isn't guilty."

The train had moved away as he spoke. Maroc's son and the detective boarded the carriage, the guard turned the key.

"I have seen you before," the old lady said as her eyes fell on Caron.

"No, Madame la Princesse." He uncovered and stood before her in the glare.

"You do not look French."

"I am so."

"We need your help in the care of my child," she said again more graciously. Her cheeks were bright red, like autumn leaves. She read about Lemet in all the papers the guard could buy. She sent Caron to Maroc's salon.

"You have taken a dislike to him," Alexis whispered.

When the lights were turned down they slept a little, and the train, shrieking now and then, still rushed southwestward, a glowing projectile slung across the night.

III.

THE Parisian Hôtel Ganodkin had been newly decorated for Princess Alexis. Its long rooms were a mirrored maze, wherein splendid toilettes flashed through clouds of cigarette smoke. Caron wandered reflectively to and fro when the Prince and Princesses received, otherwise he merely shadowed Alexis Prentorowitch when he went out on errands of diplomacy, for the morning's ride, or for an hour in the "Cercle Cosmopolite." He had his room in their hotel and played a fourth with them at their eternal "Bridge" game, if there were no

one else at hand. He showed an apathetic approval of his charge sometimes, and when the Princesses asked him questions, hoping to be reassured of the Prince's safety, he would never say more than "No attempt on his life will be made unless the sign is given. You look upon it as a warning of the victim to make his peace with God. It is also an order to his executioner, who has been following him, perhaps for months."

"But you are sure no one shadows him?"

"No one but me, Mesdames. Except in his own house or in his carriage with you or some other trusted persons, he is always within sight."

"That man makes me feel secure," the new Princess would say gladly.

Paris was agog over Lemet's experience and the death of Borovotsky, and Paris resents sorrow in the spring season; the spring season is for flirtation, racing, bonnets, and cafés. Men would say to each other as they drove from the Ganodkins: "They are welcome to their vogue. If Ganodkin won the Grand Prix, it wouldn't cure him of looking for black crosses and listening for that unpronounceable death-march."

All the women visitors said sad things too. But then no woman admits a young wife to be as happy as she seems, and, besides, they envied her the Ganodkin victoria, which experts called the smartest in Europe.

Early on Good Friday, when the draped churches were collecting their earliest worshippers, this equipage, containing the Mother-title, drew up at the dingy "residence" of M. Rias, "Directeur des Officiers," the omnipresent Rias of the Secret Police.

Her tiny groom rang his bell, and soon she sat opposite the great detective in the early morning light.

"I have written you every day for eight days," she said angrily, "and this is the first moment you appoint a meeting."

"I did not know until yesterday that I had such a distinguished correspondent. Every morning I received a letter signed 'Sophé.' Not knowing her Excellency's device,—I confess it!—I thought myself in touch with a stocking person, if her Excellency permits it, a corset person."

"Pig!" the Princess cried violently, "if you'd known I was a princess you would have attended to me? And the little dressmakers are not granted interviews with republican administrators? One does not need to visit theatres to see farces, sir! You are a farce."

Rias was rarely in the wrong, but, adjusting himself to novel circumstances, he apologized so gracefully that he was forgiven. The

Princess then came to the point. "I wish you to displace Caron, my son's shadow," she said simply.

"That is as if one asked Holland to remove its dykes," he cried. "Why?"

"I distrust him. He joined us in my private carriage at Gamost." The Princess was like all good women when about to relate anything: she always got a good ways back of her story, that she might protract the pleasure of narration. "When he entered my carriage I said, 'I have seen you before.' I could not remember where. But in the middle of the night the face his resembled jumped to my mind, and it was the face of the agitator who founded the Brothers Implacable."

Rias smiled scornfully. "Caron is at most thirty-six," he returned patiently, "and if the criminal you mention were alive he would be over eighty."

"That does not prevent a horrible likeness between these men," she answered.

"I have even seen an English servant who looked like Peter the Great. Oh, her Excellency merely wishes to establish a likeness."

"This likeness was in my mind," she continued, "when I determined to look into Maroc's salon for another sight of this Caron. The door was open, so that we could call if anything were wanted in the night. We were in comparative darkness, but I thought I could see without being seen. Raising myself on my sofa, I looked through the open door to find your detective with a pocket electric lantern, 'type mignonne,' rifling a tin box of mine which I rarely lock. He was reading a list of my investments! I called Maroc. Caron came in his place. 'Your servant is sleeping,' he said. 'Is there a tin box in there?' I inquired. 'I will see,' he replied. He returned with it. I locked it for the first time in years—with its own key, which I carry with others on my key-ring. He was as calm as a May morning."

"Excellent, Excellency! very good indeed!" Rias laughed. "To guard you, this man must know all. I could do nothing but praise him for such investigation. I think his zeal ill-timed, but yet, Excellency, it is laudable!"

The Princess interrupted him with a grand gesture. "I believe there are better detectives than this one," she said. "I think he is a Nihilist himself. Oh, yes, M. Rias, I know them by sight, as you know a criminal of ordinary guilt, as a doctor knows measles. Send me his record in your department. I believe you will be unable to furnish his history except while he has served you. Nihilists have no pasts for publication. Good-morning."

"That woman is a lunatic!" Rias exclaimed when he had closed the door.

IV.

CARON's record arrived the next day. M. Rias knew nothing of him prior to his service in the Secret Police. "He may have been an English clergyman, he may have been a king," Rias wrote. The Princess was so angry she could not eat her breakfast. An American newspaper had offered a prize to anyone discovering the murderer of an American millionaire, poisoned in Lucerne. M. Caron won that prize, and so cleverly that it attracted Rias's attention. Caron at length joined his force, where he had been distinguished. M. Rias had known him six years. The Princess rang her bell.

"Where does M. Caron sleep?" she asked Maroc, who answered it.

"In this house, in the room that M. Lemet occupied before he was moved to his own apartment."

"You may go."

She consulted Rias's letter once more. He wrote that in removing Caron he felt he would be threatening the Prince's life. He virtually wrote that he would not remove him. Rising, the old woman sought Caron's room; she had seen him go out with her son on foot.

The room was dimly lighted; its windows, opening on the service court, were close-shuttered. Boxes, all locked, were ranged against the wall; a valise was unlocked, and the Princess found it packed. There was nothing in the drawers of his chiffonnière, no toothbrush, even, in his dressing-room, and all his luggage was stamped "F. Brown, New York." "He could leave at a moment's notice," the Princess said to herself. "It must be time to strike." She felt sure that Caron's was the hand. "Does a man who is subject to fits analyze his symptoms when they warn him of an attack? Not he. I am subject to Nihilists," she said as she left the room, "and I know what to expect of this one."

She went into her son's room. The Princess Alexis was there, whiter than her peignoir; horror widened her eyes; she could not stand, but sank weakly on a stiff chair beside a brazier.

"Where is Caron?" she asked the Mother-title, "I have something for him."

The Princess snatched a little paper from the girl's cold hand. It was a diagram of the opera-house, and against their box a Greek cross was marked in black ink.

"Is it not terrible?" Princess Alexis asked.

"Where did you find it?" the Mother-Princess demanded rapidly.

"In the hall. Lemet or no Lemet, Alexis must not go to his opera on Monday evening."

"No, he must not. But, again, this is no warning."

Princess Alexis looked surprised. "It is the sign," she objected.

"They haven't played their silly tune yet," the old lady answered;

"they behave like a church with their ritual. This paper belongs to Caron. I have discovered him. He is an Implacable. Oh, yes, I tell you this, I can prove it. He will miss this; its meaning is plain; he will want it again—oh, fearfully! He will miss it directly and return for it. It was for some accomplice, no doubt. He will abandon the plan of which it was a part, but he will leave Alexis unprotected anywhere to come search for this. If you love Alexis, tell Caron *nothing!*"

The Princess Alexis looked at the old woman with frank disbelief. "But he is a detective, the sworn foe of secret clubs. Do not be unjust to him, our one safeguard. Besides, he is so meek. These truculent butchers are different; you yourself called them truculent."

"I called them so?" the Mother-title cried, laughing in her intrepid fashion,—there was a general dauntlessness about her which grew at each moment,—"perhaps I did call them so. I just call them what I please when I feel like it. Come."

She drew the younger woman towards the corridor. "Did he call for Alexis, or did they meet at the main door?"

"He called for Alexis here, in his room."

The Princess threw the diagram down on the red carpet of the corridor; the pink azaleas threw their glow upon the white paper until it was rosy. "Tinged with blood," the old lady whispered exultingly, as if that chance color were a proof of Caron's intent. Princess Alexis thought her crazy, perhaps this awful strain—— She caught the Mother-title's hand and kissed it, convinced that anxiety had unhinged a noble mind. Ten minutes passed, the two women, hid in the Prince's room, looking out on the sunlit corridor. Presently steps were heard on the stairway, a quick voice questioned one of the lackeys, and then the steps came on. Caron turned into the corridor; his face was white, anxious; he looked from right to left, left to right, but still walked without loitering. He stooped, picked up the diagram, and moved on towards his room. There was an air of relief in his back, his shoulders seemed straighter.

"Now, don't faint," the Princess Ganodkin said hurriedly, "but get me a pair of socks, a pair of pumps, a shirt, cravat, evening clothes, everything belonging to Alexis. Bring them, dearest child, to my boudoir, and tell Alexis nothing. Tell Caron nothing. Maroc knows all and agrees with me."

"I don't believe Caron is a Nihilist," the girl said tearfully.

"Well, you will," the old lady answered good-naturedly. "Get what I said, and be quick, dear."

She moved towards her boudoir, stopping suddenly to laugh with real mirth. "That pig Rias! what an idiot it is!" she said grimly.

When the Princess Alexis brought a portion of her husband's wardrobe to his mother's boudoir she felt convinced of the madness of that

elderly potentate. For herself, she feared to give Caron her confidence, much less Alexis, but to give her husband's clothes into the keeping of the Mother-title seemed a harmless idiocy. Her slim arms were draped with pantaloons, she carried an opera-hat crushed convulsively against her side, and on entering the room the Princess Ganodkin was visible at the centre-table, her Greek testament open before her, her lips twitching with deep emotion. She knitted quietly enough at an afghan, pretending to be at ease. "I hate everything sensational so!" she exclaimed. "I must relax like this, or die of excitement. Thank you, little Clotheshorse," she added, nodding towards her son's garments; "throw them on the divan."

"Will you tell me what you're going to do with them?" Princess Alexis inquired anxiously.

"Watch Maroc, that will tell you better than I can; he will be here presently."

When Maroc came he brought a stranger with him, a short, fat man, with whom the Mother-title spoke Dutch. The Princess Alexis, not understanding the language, stood silent in despairing wonderment.

They went into the dressing-room, where the stout stranger moved about in a business-like way, unwrapping a box of paints, and putting strange little trowels and dull knives with flexible blades into a neat row on the washhand-stand. A high press, carved upon the whole of its available surface, six feet in height at the least, and with double doors, spoke loudly of Russia from the midst of modern French furnishing. The stranger fitted a key to this press and opened its door. "This was all my idea," the Princess Ganodkin said complacently. Maroc rushed to the window. "Caron has just gone out again," he said.

The Princess Alexis did not even feel she was dreaming. What passed before her eyes seemed more remote than that. She felt that she watched another dream, as the two men lifted a sheeted tailor's dummy from the press, standing it in the middle of the room. No wig was on its head as yet, and a great hole above the neck gaped brainless to the ceiling. The little man produced a wig from under his coat-tails; it capped the likeness suddenly. "Perfect, Excellency!" Maroc cried. "Admirable!" her Excellency grunted. "What a mockery!" the Princess Alexis said, covering her eyes with her hand. Princess Ganodkin smiled her wonderfully becoming smile, but said nothing.

"In this case," Maroc said, as though he were instructing in a university,— "in this case the blow cannot be dealt Alexis Prentorowitch in his own house. Two of the lackeys are detectives, so the order to strike must also be given out-of-doors. This Society of Implacables signs its infamies to intimidate."

"Intimidation is the pet weapon of Nihilism."

"He talks like a shilling shocker," the Princess Ganodkin said in English.

"Also," Maroc continued, "the blow cannot be dealt while they are in the coupé together, for I am always on the box. I would not let him escape alive. These rascals are few and do not risk their lives, as once they did, lest they die out. They will attack Alexis Prentorowitch when he is with his——"

"You talk too much!" the Mother-title said sternly. Maroc had spoken Russian that the Dutchman might not understand. He forgot the new Princess, white and absorbed, beside him.

"We are going for a drive now," the elder woman continued quietly, "and when we come in I hope to hear that the dummy is dressed and hidden in the stable. When the coupé calls to take me to M. Lemet's opera, see that the dummy is in the left corner. Be thou on the box, Maroc, and until Monday evening comes I shall give no further orders, unless my plan is changed."

She put gold in the stranger's hand, and the two women left the boudoir for a turn in the sunshine amongst the other women who had left their troubles at home to keep house by themselves.

V.

THE Princess Ganodkin had arrived at a definite conclusion, that the time chosen to attack her son would be while he drove with her or with his wife. His sleeping-hours were thrice guarded, by his wife and Maroc and one of the detectives—four times guarded if one count Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. And the Ganodkins were devout, after the most perfervid fashion of the Green communion. She was determined that he should not go to Lemet's opera; the crowds and darkness, the long tail of carriages creeping towards a blinding light, the confused cries, the ensemble of a first night, seemed perfect conditions for assassination without arrest. Thirty years before the murderer would not ask his own life, but avengers had grown scarce, even in Russia. She was sure Caron would try to escape, sure that he would not turn on Alexis if he were alone with him. Each night she thought of it all in a dreary routine. Caron tasted his food, which prevented poisoning; Caron opened letters and parcels, which foiled infernal machines; her own precaution against murder had demanded one untried confederate. She often wondered if the Dutch wax worker would tell of his activity in the Hôtel Ganodkin. Easter Sunday was gay with flowers and visits; Lemet drove to mass and the papers rang with it; Ganodkin went also, as recorded in the society columns of four cities. It was also recorded that Lemet was forbidden to attend his first night by his physicians. Monday wore away in anxiety; the

Princess Alexis was ill from shock and fretting. "Humor her," the Doctor said. "We never do anything else," they answered simply. "Well, Prince, in short, stay at home from this opera; the thought of that crowd being the cover of an assassin——" "Dear child," Prince Alexis said, looking enormously gratified. "Well, Doctor, we shall see what can be done. Thank you for the hint. Good-morning."

The Mother-title drummed on the table when the Doctor left them. "Friendship demands that you go to Lemet's opera. Don't tell even Caron that you won't go. You know these newspapers. Suppose they imputed cowardice to us, and said *you* feared the crowd? Just send Caron on ahead and tell him to meet us without fail on the steps of the house, not even in the foyer, but as we alight. Then change your mind at the last moment, so no one will know, and your wife's sudden illness can be your plea."

"That is best," Alexis agreed; "newspaper innuendo would be the last straw."

Within her own room the Princess Ganodkin was feeble and unnerved; with her family and servants she was pale and vague, but perfectly serene. Her one fear was that Alexis would tell Caron his plan.

About six on the afternoon of Monday the drawing-rooms were full of visitors; the Prince was playing piquet in an anteroom; a fresh voice sang elaborately, trilling in scales from the salon de musique. Caron moved to and fro, observing, unobserved, like a cat deciding the excellencies and drawbacks of its habitat. One of the lackeys entered the room with a black iron cross. A tiny tin box was added to its under side, and although it had no wrapper, a tag, type-written, consigned it to Prince Alexis Ganodkin, in the French designation, without his father's name attached. The Mother-title snatched it; Caron had gone to look in at the card-room. A little lever put forth from the tiny tin box at the reverse of the cross; she pushed it and the strains of "Rakotzky" tinkled in the room under cover of the trilling voice. "A musical box," she said lightly, with white lips.

"My orders are to take everything to M. Caron," the lackey said as the Mother-title put the cross on a table. She gave him the thing gladly, glad also that the Princess Alexis had not been downstairs to see it arrive.

In another moment the Prince rushed to her, holding it in his hand. "Caron thinks it a joke," he said; "don't worry. Some fool has been trying to frighten me."

"Do you think it a joke?" the Princess asked solemnly of Caron.

"Ye-es, a grim joke," he answered. "Is it your wish that we act on it? All possible precaution is taken, why be alarmed?"

"Put the thing out of sight!" the Prince said nervously, "and see that the news of it goes no further."

Maroc said it was the sign. "You know it is no joke," he said doggedly, crossing himself with terrorized prayers.

The Prince dined alone with his mother; her heart knocked at the jewelled opening of her corsage as if it would leap from her into the room. Her lips, which framed prayers, rejected food. She had ordered a special guard to surround the opera-box. It was the drive she feared. The minutes wore on towards the one which was to witness her departure. The Prince went upstairs to his wife, first calling Caron, who waited in the hall. "You go to the opera first. Wait for us at the steps. To be frank, Caron, I wish to see you the moment the coupé door is opened."

"You will, Excellency. Au 'voir."

The Princess Ganodkin watched him from the window upstairs. A lackey called his fiacre, he stepped into it, and was gone. She rushed to his room; there was no luggage there but an old trunk, apparently overflowing with soiled cravats, unlocked.

Maroc was behind her in his redingote, ready for the box of her coupé. "Yes, Excellency, his things were moved while you were at dinner. He had a new name painted on everything. It is time to go."

"Good-night, Alexis."

She paused at his door. He sat on the edge of his wife's lounge and waved his hand to her.

"Do not come down, I have Maroc; stay within doors," she said.

Presently she took her place in the coupé, beside the dummy.

VI.

"You are not bad," she said to it. "Lean forward—so."

It seemed very real in the darkness. The ribbon of Michael crossed its heartless shirt-front. Maroc had put some other orders on it, which glittered if they passed a street-lamp. Somehow the first shock of learning the Implacables were at work again returned to her. The account of Borovotsky in the *Figaro*, the slow-running Tiesen, her vis-à-vis in travel, the prospective widow of her only son, were sad items of tragedy. She put her hand protectingly on the dummy. "You won't feel anything, you know," she said kindly, "and you *do* help me so in the care of my child."

Her mind ran forward to meeting Madame Lemet in the opera-box. She must get ready details of a story of Alexis's absence; she leaned back in her corner, inventing them. Presently they took their place in the line; it was the longest line she could remember; she tried to reckon her distance from the door of the opera-house. She noticed that Maroc had left the box and was standing on the pavement. He opened the door of the coupé. "I've seen him—across the street," he said, closing it again.

Then the other door opened; Caron put in his head and shoulders. He said nothing, but struck the dummy in the chest, with a heavy, tearing noise. The Princess caught at him, but he slammed the door and was off. She screamed, Maroc wrenched his door wide, and they looked at the dummy's wound: the ribbon of Michael was rent by a modern poniard, sharper than a razor.

"Give the alarm; let him think himself successful," the Princess commanded. They screamed together: "A doctor! a doctor!" "Murder!" Holding the dummy in her arms, she screened him from the crowd. Maroc kept people from the coupé by fierce demands of air for the victim.

Rias rushed from the Café Brillante. "Is this possible?" he cried in horror, tearing along the pavement.

"Come into the carriage and tell my man to drive us to the Doctor's," the old woman said serenely at sight of him. "I was right about Caron."

The Mother-title Ganodkin wakes at night with the memory of Caron's blow on the dummy chest and her horror of his dagger. She goes to sleep again laughing at M. Rias. She bet with him, the wager being that he would never learn a word of Caron before he joined the Secret Police or after he took French leave of it. The Brothers Implacable continue to dispatch the obnoxious at long intervals and after serving them with the sign. Her friends fear for the Princess Ganodkin, who says serenely, "Somehow, I feel they will not molest us again." M. Rias is her valued friend.



HOW COULD I KNOW?

BY H. TALBOT KUMMER

HOW could I know that you were Love,
 You! humble hooded figure in the snow?
 My eyes were lifted far above
 Thy pleading, outstretched hands, thy look of woe.

I deemed thee but a beggar, far
 Below the vision of my dream, and so,
 While seeking thee as some high star,
 I passed thee by. Ah Love! how could I know?

HIRAM MATHEWS'S MONUMENT

By Clinton Dangerfield



"AIN'T no feller so meachen but what he can leave some sorter remembrance behind him if he's a mind to—sort of monymment, as it were."

Hiram's sister, tall, angular, dominant, paused in reply on her way to the sink, to which she had already begun to convey the dirty dishes, though Hiram Mathews had not finished his breakfast.

"I declare for't," she said scornfully, "you *do* git the queerest idees, Hiram. Jest look at yourself—you allers wuz the runt of the family, and you ain't hardly been able to scrape a livin' fer us two here in the village by thet clerkship of yours. Yit here you be talkin' of leavin' a monymment—suthin' for folks to remember ye by!"

"I do the best I can with the clerkin', Statira," returned her brother, swallowing a sigh. "You'd ort to bear in mind that money-makin' is a gift—comes natural to some folks and not to other some, no matter how they work. But moneymakin' ain't the question, Statira. The idee is fer each to do a leetle suthin' to live—afterwards." He paused distressfully, lacking words to express what he meant. "I don't want to pass away entirely—every scrap of me forgot here in Greenville. I want people to say, 'Hiram thought of us when he planted those.'"

"Planted *what*?"

"Trees! I'm goin' to have a green monymment, Statira—in Greenville." He chuckled faintly, despite the open contempt on his sister's face.

She whisked off the remainder of the plates angrily.

"Fer clean, unnatural foolishness," she declared, "you are the beatenist!"

Thereafter the newly developed lunacy of the stoop-shouldered little middle-aged clerk was notorious in Greenville—Greenville, who did not deserve her name, for she was forlornly destitute of greenness.

Dusty and bare were her streets, dusty and bare her yards. The few exceptions in spots did but make the desolation of the whole place more pointed. But now, before "opening time" in the morning and after "closing time" in the evening, a bent figure, with a spade in one

hand and a little forest scion in the other, might be seen carefully selecting a proper site for his treasure.

Most people made no objections to this continuous planting. It did no harm and amused the clerk, for whom everyone felt a kind of condescending pity.

Hiram was sixty when the last of his trees were planted—he was eighty when they had grown to fair, broad-leaved, straight-limbed saplings, whose even lines and well-chosen varieties were beginning to create a marvellous difference in the appearance of Greenville. Daily the old man, now no longer a worker, wandered up and down the streets whenever the weather permitted, looking with eyes of infinite gladness upon the beautiful, living columns of his monument.

His idea was still a jest with Greenville. It continued so until one memorable afternoon, when her chief citizens found themselves facing a very earnest speaker in the Town Hall.

"As you are aware," the latter was saying, "it is now a question whether our railroad will run through your village or through Annapole, fifteen miles to your left. You are also aware that the routes are so equal in advantages touching construction that it now becomes a matter of which village is, *per se*, the more desirable—which will be the greater credit to the road. I have determined on Greenville."

Enthusiastic cheering shook the hall. The townsfolk had long and eagerly coveted a railroad. They were shrewd enough to see that Greenville was dying of inanition—that she must be fed by stores and new interests brought by the power of the tireless steam and steel. They had trembled in their boots lest Annapole get it—and Annapole had been so insolently cocksure that they had trembled all the more! When the cheering subsided the speaker resumed:

"I will now tell you why I decided on Greenville"—an impressive pause, and then he added pointedly: "It is because I was delighted to see that you appreciate the commercial value of beauty."

The Greenvillians stared stupidly at one another. What did the man mean? Was this irony?

"This important side of progress," continued the Dictator, "is overlooked or neglected in nine sections out of ten. It seems impossible to convince the average citizen that the 'Open, Sesame,' to an investor's pocket is a trim, well-shaded town. I do not deny that your village leaves something to be remedied. Your front yards do not match your remarkably beautiful and promising avenues of trees."

The stranger lifted a glass of water near him. Perhaps this prevented him from seeing how very redfaced the Greenvillians had suddenly become, or how an aged, wrinkled countenance, very much in the rear, became suffused with sudden, innocent light. Not that Hiram felt one touch of rejoicing over the manifest discomfiture of his brother

citizens or of triumph in his unexpected victory. His was rather the pure joy of one who perceived that his work is understood.

"Your trees," pursued the speaker crisply, "make me confident that you will remedy the defects I shall point out to you. So now, in the name of your well-shaded streets, which will yearly increase in beauty until your children's children will bless your forethought for posterity, I congratulate you on your acquisition of the railroad, and thereby of prosperity!"

He was about to descend after this imposing flourish when Squire Warren, the most distinguished of Greenville's citizens, gathering his courage, rose bravely to the occasion.

"Mr. Lanham," he said a little thickly, "before ye go away I want ye sh'd know that the credit of them trees——"

"Belongs to *all* Greenville," said a clear, eager voice, rising above the weakness of age. "That all of us love 'em and will tend 'em alike." After which Hiram collapsed in much confusion.

There was a supper given that night. Not to the Dictator of Railroad Paths, either! For at the head of the table sat a beaming and happy old man, to whom healths were drunk recklessly and often in the hardest of hard cider.

He is at rest now. He sleeps under the trees he loved so well, while they (through sweet summer rains and golden sunshine) wax yearly into greater loveliness and strength.



JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

BY FLORENCE EARLE COATES

GREATEST of modern painters, he is dead!—
 Whistler, in whom death seemed to have no part:
 He of the nimble wit and jocund heart,
 Who sipped youth's nectar at the fountain-head,
 And felt its wine through all his veins run red:
 Who worshipped the ideal—not the mart,
 And blessed the world with an imperial Art,
 Whereby who longs for beauty may be fed!

When things men deem momentous are forgot,
 Laurels will bloom for him that wither not,
 And Death's inverted torch shall fail to smother
 The light of genius, tender and sublime,
 Which with austere restraint, and for all time,
 Painted the gentle portrait of the "Mother"!

THE FASCINATING OF MR. SAVAGE

BY

HELEN MILECETE

AUTHOR OF "A DETACHED PIRATE,"
"A GIRL OF THE NORTH," ETC.



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